HINDU-PAD-PADASHAHI

OR

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE HINDU EMPIRE OF MAHARASHTRA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Hindutva. The book represents the considered opinion of the author on the vital present day problems of Hindu Sangathan. Who is a Hindu? etc. 1 4 0

An Echo from the Andamans. This book contains the series of letters written by the Author to his brother Dr. Savarkar from his Andaman Jail 1 0 0

VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

Hindu-Pad-Padashahi

OR

A Review of the
HINDU EMPIRE OF MAHARASHTRA

BY

V. D. SAVARKAR

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PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT

THE Author needs no introduction, and the book no apology. There is no subject on which there has been more by way of perversion of facts and judgments than on that of the role played by the Marathas in Indian History at a most critical epoch. Much has, no doubt, been done in recent years, but we believe that the present publication makes an earnest attempt to place the Maratha contribution to Indian History in its proper perspective, briefly and clearly. The Author has, in doing this, laid under contribution all contemporary records,—historical, literary and epistolary,—and there is not a single fact cited here for which he is not prepared to quote chapter and verse as authority.

While we, therefore, announce its publication with pleasure, we have, at the same time,

to express regret for the delay owing to causes about which it is useless to complain. It has been printed in Madras and has not, therefore, had the benefit of the Author's immediate correction: and we crave the indulgence of the reader for the errors that have crept in in consequence. The Index at the end of the book will, we believe, prove useful.

INTRODUCTION

THE rise and growth of the Maratta Power must ever remain as one of the most fascinating and stimulating chapters of Indian history. Looked at from a broader point of view, it ceases to be merely of local interest, and occupies its rightful place in the history of the development of humanity in which the successful struggle of the down-trodden against their mighty oppressors fills the largest space.

It is seldom, however, that the subject is viewed in its true perspective. It is too often presented either as the wonderful, bordering on supernatural story of a mighty hero, or the successful struggle of a military race against the powerful Moghul empire. The writer of the following pages, however, has rightly perceived that behind all these was a noble and inspiring ideal. This ideal, in the words of the author, was Hindu-Pad-Padashahi, the establishment of an independent Hindu Empire. As the author has correctly observed, "the consciousness of this noble ideal animated their efforts from generation to generation, gave to their distant and widely scattered activities a unity of aim and kinship of interests, and made them feel that their cause was the cause of their *Dharma* and their *Desh*."

The author has taken this as his thesis, and brought forward facts and figures to substantiate it in full. He has quoted facts to show how from almost the very beginning of his career, Shivaji was regarded as the deliverer of the Hindu race from the aliens' rule, and nobly responded to the solemn appeal of his co-religionist even beyond the borders of Maharashtra.

Shivaji died, but the noble ideal survived him. The general impression is that the history of the Maratta nation began and ended with Shivaji and what followed was a "confusion worse confounded by selfish and demoralised struggle of stray adventurous bands of freebooters." But, as the author of the following pages has shown, nothing can be a greater mistake. Shivaji was followed by a long and brilliant succession of worthy captains who carried aloft the banner of their illustrious Chief, and realised his noble ideal to a far greater degree.

At last, the table was completely turned. The proud Moghuls were humbled to the dust and the 'Gerua' banner of the Marattas was planted on the fort of Delhi. The dream of a pan-Hindu empire, for which generations of heroes and martyrs had lived and died, was within the range of practical politics.

But it was not to be, for Panipat decided otherwise. The Marattas, however, did not renounce their old ideal and rose above the

most tremendous calamities that can befall a nation. ' Each home had to mourn the loss of some one of its relations, yet there was scarcely a home in Maharashtra that did not vow to redeem the national honour and win the cause for which its heroes fell.'

Once more had the Marattas succeeded in nearly accomplishing their task. They had occupied Delhi, and the Moghul emperor sought protection in their hands. The Nizam's power was laid low. Throughout northern and southern India the reputation of the Marattas again rose high, and inspired hope in the hearts of millions.

Then came the age of the traitors and cowards, unworthy descendants of those who fought for the cause of India's freedom. It was a grim tragedy that laid low the mighty nation and shattered its high ideals.

Such is the fascinating story that Mr. Savarkar has to tell his readers. It is a theme of profound interest to modern India—fraught with lessons of inestimable value. The author has soared high above the matter-of-fact history and drawn bold relief the spirit lying behind it. He has justly observed that the Hindu revival, in order to be complete, required not only freedom from political bondage, but also liberation from the superstitions that had gathered round it in course of centuries. He had shown that the Marattas, while success-

fully achieving the first, made an earnest effort to secure the latter. They initiated the revolutionary movement of *Suddhi* in order to re-admit the apostates into the Hindu fold, but could not achieve a large measure of success in this direction. "The reason is," as the author remarks, "that although fetters of political slavery can at times be shaken off and smashed, yet the fetters of cultural superstition are often found far more difficult to knock off."

The author has further shown that the result of the combat between the English and the Marattas was a foregone conclusion—for the Marattas, along with other Indians, lacked in those "public virtues" which the English nation possesses to an eminent degree. Here are two important lessons which modern India should not ignore.

Standing on the grave of the last and one of the most glorious of our Hindu empires the author has asked us to watch and hope. Let us say 'amen.'

RAMNA, DACCA.
20th December '25.

R. C. MAJUMDAR.

A FOREWORD

In spite of the fact that the past is ever rapidly receding from us further and further, the indefatigable exertions of a band of Maratha scholars led by Messrs. Rajwade and others had thrown such a flood of new light on the history of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra that the salient features of that great movement have become far more clearly discernable to us than they were to those who were constrained for want of better means to view the history through the distorted and dim glasses of foreign scholarship alone. But as the monumental material, consisting of state records, documents, original letters and contemporary narratives that the Maratha scholars have discovered and laid under contribution, is to a very great extent confined to the Marathi language and as no attempt, excepting that of Mr. Justice Ranade, has been made to rewrite, at least concisely, the history of Maharashtra in the light that these valuable researches throw on it, in a language that would place before the non-Maratha scholars and readers the fruits of their labours, the Indian public, not to speak of that of any other nation, has still very dim, curious and even perverted nations regarding both the heroic principles that animated the Maratha movement as well as the far-reaching effects it had on the course of the larger history of the Indian People. In the absence of such a comprehensive work as would marshal out all the details of this

history under a masterly review in this new light thrown on it, we had long intended to write at least a monograph, a small handbook that would pave a way to a large work and acquaint the Non-Maratha readers with the great message that the movement came to deliver, the outline of the momentous mission it strove to fulfil. In 1910 A. D. we had, just after finishing the work we wrote on the history of the Sikhs but which was throttled even in the hour of its birth by the ruthless shocks of Revolutionary struggle, even commenced such a handbook in the English language on the history of the Marathas.

Just then, duties more imminent and exacting involved us in a dreadful combat with forces of darkness and death in the solitary cells of the Andamans and blotted out the very hope of ever surviving to resume our labour of love.

But ultimately it has pleased Providence to grant us liberty and strength enough to take up our pen again, and thus we are able to-day to pay this humble and loving tribute to the mission of those of our illustrious forefathers who, in the 17th and the 18th centuries, fought so gallantly and succeeded so well in vindicating the honour, and winning back the Freedom, of our Hindu Race.

Even an essentially provincial movement, whether it be a Rajput or a Sikh, a Maratha or a Madrasi achievement, is bound to reflect its greatness on the

history of Hindudom as a whole. The achievement of a section necessarily reveals the latent possibilities of the whole race. But apart from that reason the Maratha movement under review transcends the limits of a provincial movement so decisively and so deliberately that it seems pre-eminently entitled to a *Pan-Hindu* importance and treatment. In fact, we will fail to understand its significance altogether unless it is perceived from a Pan-Hindu stand-point. Therefore, our chief aim in writing this critical work which is primarily addressed to the public outside Maharashtra, has been to ascertain and appraize the value of the Maratha movement in terms of Hindu History. The book is therefore meant, not primarily to tell a detailed story of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra, but to bring out the salient principles and ideals that animated it. Nevertheless, we have devoted the first part to draw a running sketch of the Maratha history, giving in more or less correlated form such events and details as we thought absolutely necessary to substantiate general observations made in the second part. As the public outside Maharashtra is acquainted better with the life of Shivaji and as Mr. Ranade, the gifted author of *The Rise of the Maratha Power*, has unravelled to that public the inner moral grandeur of the mission and of the activities of the Marathas down to Rajaram's death and Shahu's return, we have referred to that period but in passing and concerned ourselves more with the period that follows it.

The grand message that the story of the rise and fall of this our Hindu Empire has to deliver to our Hindu Race is writ large on every page of the book. So we need very little to say and introduce it to our Hindu brethren.

To our Muhammadan readers, however, a word of explanation is needed. The duty of a Historian is primarily to depict as far as possible the feelings, motives, emotions and actions of the actors themselves whose deed he aims to relate. This he cannot do faithfully and well, unless he, for the time being, rids himself not only of all prejudices and prepossessions but even of the fears of the consequences the story of the past might be calculated to have on the interests of the present. That latter end he should try to serve by any other means than the falsification or exaggeration or underestimation of the intentions and actions of the past. A writer on the life of Muhammad, for example, would be wanting in his duty, if he tries to smoothen down the fierce attacks on "Idolatry" and the dreadful threats held before the "Unbelievers" by that heroic Arab, only to ingratiate himself with the sentiments of those of his fellow-countrymen or readers who do not belong to the Moslem persuasion. He should try to do that bybeing himself more tolerant, or even by drawing a moral more in consonance with reason and freedom of thought and worship, if he can honestly do so, after he has faithfully recounted the story of that life with all its uncompromising

episodes. If he cannot do that, he had better give up the thought of writing the life of Muhammad altogether. Just as this responsibility lies on the shoulder of an honest biographer of Muhammad, there is a corresponding obligation on the part of those of his readers who do not fully, or at all, contribute to the teaching of Muhammad, which they owe to the writer. They too ought to know that an author, who in the discharge of his duties as a historian of yesterday, of Muhammad or Babar or Aurangzeb, depicts their aspirations and deeds in all their moods, fierce or otherwise, faithfully, and even gloriously or appreciatingly, need not necessarily be wanting in the discharge of his duties as a citizen of today, may even be most kindly disposed to his fellow-countrymen or fellowmen of other religious persuasions or racial lineage. In dealing with that period of Hindu History when the Hindus were engaged in a struggle of life and death with the Muhammadan power, we have never played false to our duty of depicting the great actions and their causes in relation to their environments and expressing the sentiments of the actors almost in their own words, trying thus to discharge the duty of an author as faithfully as we could. Especially our Muhammadan countrymen, against the deeds of whose ancestors the history under review was a giant and mighty protest which we hold justifiable, will try to read it without attributing, solely on that ground, any ill feeling to us towards our Muhammadan country-

men of this generation or towards the community itself as such. It would be as suicidal and as ridiculous to borrow the hostilities and combats of the past only to fight them out into the present, as it would be for a Hindu and a Muhammadan to lock each other suddenly in a death-grip while embracing, only because Shivaji and Afzulkhan had done so hundreds of years ago.

We ought to read history, not with a view to find out the best excuse to perpetuate the old strife and stress, bickerings and bloodsheds, whether in the name of our blessed motherland, "of our Lord God," that divided man from man and race from race, but precisely for the contrary reason of finding out the root causes that contributed to, and the best means to the removal of that stress and strife, of those bickerings and bloodsheds, so that man may be drawn towards man because he is man, the child of that our common father God—and nursed at the breast of this our common mother—Earth—and wield humanity in a World-Commonwealth.

But, on the other hand, the brilliance of this ultimate hope ought not to dazzle our eyes into blindness towards the solid and imminent fact that men and groups, and races in the process to consolidation into larger social units have, under the stern law of nature, to get forged into that larger existence on the anvil of war through struggle and sacrifice. Those alone who can stand this fierce ordeal will prove their

fitness, not only the moral but even the physical fitness, that entitles races and types to survive in this world. Therefore, before you make out a case for unity, you must make out a case for survival as a national or a social human unit. It was this fierce test that the Hindus were called upon to pass in their deadly struggle with the Muhammadan power. There could not be an honourable unity between a slave and his master. Had the Hindus failed to rise and prove their strength to seek retribution for the wrongs done to them as a nation and a race, even if the Muhammadans stretched out a hand of peace, it would have been an act of condescension and not of friendship,and the Hindus could not have honourably grasped it with that fervour and sincerity and confidence which a sense of equality alone breeds. But the colossal struggle which the Hindus waged with those who were then their foemen in the name of their *Dev* and *Desh*, really paved the way to an honourble unity between the two combating giants. That is why we said, in our work on the history of the national rising of 1857, that the day that witnessed the forces of the 'Haribhaktas', of Hindudom, enter Delhi in triumph and the Moslem throne and crown and standard lay hammered and rolling in dust at the feet of Bhau and Vepishvas in 1761 A. D. was the day which made an honourable unity between the Hindus and the Moslems more or less feasible. For, that day the Hindus won their freedom back, proved even their

physical fitness to survive on equal and honourable terms in this world. They conquered the conqueror and then could honourably embrace him if so he wished, as a fellow-countryman and friend. Viewed in this light, the history of the Marathas is so far from standing in the way of any real and honourble unity between our Hindus and our Muhammadan countrymen that properly understood it, makes a frank and lasting union far more feasible than it would otherwise have been, and deserves therefore to be especially recommended to the attention of all Indian patriots, Moslems as well as Hindus. It cannot fail to act as a sedative on blustering snobbery on the one hand and as a stimulant to mopping self-diffidence on the other.

For the general reader, too, the story of a movement that presents the imposing spectacle of a nation in arms in defence of their just and human rights, that enlists itself on the side and in the cause of Freedom and National independence, and that brings into action generations of warriors and statesmen and builders of kingdoms and saints and poets-Shivaji and Baji Rao, Bhausaheb and Jankoji, Nana and Mahadaji, Ramdas and Moropant—cannot fail to be of an absorbing human interest.

SHIRGAON
15th February 1925

V. D. Savarkar.

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PART I

THE STORY UNDER PERSPECTIVE

" धर्मासाठीं आम्ही फुकीरि घेतली आहे "

शिवाजी

"We have taken a vow of renunciation in the interest of Religion and Righteousness."

SHIVAJI

HINDU-PAD-PADASHAHI

CHAPTER I

A NEW ERA

"स्वधर्मराज्यवृद्धि करणें! तुम्ही सुपुत्र निर्माण आहां"

Shahaji's Letter to Shivaji

It was in the year 1627 that Shivaji was born. That year was destined to be the beginning of an epoch on account of that birth. Before Shivaji was born, hundreds of gallant souls had fought and fallen martyrs in resisting the onslaughts of the Muhammadan foes and in defence of the honour of the Hindu race. Fighting as bravely as any of these martyrs and warriors who fell vanquished in the field before him, Shivaji was destined to win and create a wave of triumph which gathered in strength as it proceeded and carried the Hindu banner on its crest from glory to glory, from achievement to achievement, for a period of hundred years or so. The tide of Muhammadan conquest that followed the arms of Mahomed of Ghazni rolled down with irresistible force till all Hindustan lay submerged under it. Shivaji was the first person to raise his head above it and to command, in his stern Maratha accents: "Thus far shalt thou go; but no farther." Till the appearance of Shivaji on the political scene, it could be roughly stated that from the Himalayas to the

seas—wherever the Hindu arms met those of the Muhammadans, before 1627, the Hindus were sure to lose, now because of the sudden disappearance or death of their leader, now through the treachery of a minister here or a general there—but somehow or other every decisive struggle was sure to prove disastrous to the Hindu flag. One has only to recall Dahir's fate, Jayapal's fights, Anangapal's stand, Prithivi Raj's fall, the black day of Kalingar Sikri, Devagiri or Talikota, to convince one of the melancholy truth of the above statement. But the hand of Shivaji took hold, as if bodily, of this cursed destiny of our people and gave a right about turn and set her there, facing our opponents as sternly as she did us till then. Never again had the Hindu flag to bend before the Muhammadan crescent.

From the Himalayas to the seas, wherever the Hindu arms met those of the Muhammadans after 1627, the Hindus were sure to win and the Muhammadans sure to lick the dust, whatever be their strength or however tumultuous were their war-cries of "Allah-ho-Akbar!"—God be victorious! God doubtless proved victorious, but it was the Hindu God. After 1627 one finds God definitely enlisted on the Hindu side —on the side of the image-worshipper, and setting his face sternly against the image-breaker; one has only to recall the capture of Singhad, the defence of Pavankhind, the careers of Govindsingh, Bandu Bahadur, Chatrasal, Baji Rao, Nana, Bhau, Malhar

Rao, Parashrampant, Ranjit Singh and other numerous Maratha, Rajput and Sikh generals who beat the Muhammadans wherever and as often as they met. This turn, so momentous and so triumphant, which the political fortunes of the Hindu took was doubtless due as well to the great spiritual and national ideal which Shivaji and his spiritual preceptor Shri Ramdas placed before our race, as to the new strategical methods and the new weapons they introduced into the battlefield. Maratha warfare was as truly an addition to the science of war as it was in vogue then among Hindus, as the Maharashtra Dharma was a new force animating the dying spirit of the national life of the Hindu race.

This ideal which inspired the leaders of that War of Hindu Liberation with such faith and gave such vitality was Hindu-Pad-Padashahi—the establishment of an independent Hindu Empire ; and the method of warfare, that made Maratha arms more than a match for the Muhammadan power, and ultimately crowned the Hindu brow with laurels of victory, was the surprise or guerilla warfare.

We shall observe how the consciousness of this noble ideal animated their efforts from generation to generation, gave to their distant and widely scattered activities a unity of aim and kinship of interests, made them feel that their cause was the cause of their Dharma and their Desh,—a mission worthy of the efforts of their saints and soldiers alike,—carried the

Marathas in triumph from step to step to the gates of Delhi, to the banks of the Indus in the north and the seas in the south; and how it raised the story of their deeds to the grandeur of a great national epic that every Hindu mother can proudly sing to her infant in strains far more triumphant and ennobling than the ballads that tell us how our day was lost, how our banner was torn and how, ultimately, our foes triumphed.

It was in 1627 A.D. that Shivaji was born. The ancient chroniclers of his life tell us that, as he grew, the lad began to feel keenly the political subjugation of the Hindu race. He saw with bleeding heart how the temples of his Gods were trampled down by alien feet and how the ashes of ancient glory were dishonoured and desecrated. His brave mother, Jijabai, fed his spirits on the glories of our Hindu race, on the memories of Shri Krishna and Shri Rama, of Arjuna and Bhima, of Abhimanyu and Harischandra; nay, the very atmosphere that he breathed was tense with great expectations and aspirations. All talked of a deliverer to come to rescue the Hindu world—the people whose ancestors talked face to face with Gods and Angels and whom Shri Krishna had pledged his word never utterly to forsake. The very traditions of the lad's family assured him that his own house was destined to be the cradle of such a national deliverer as that. Was it possible that it all foretold his coming? Could he be the chosen champion of

his people, the chosen instrument of God? Whether it was to be so or not, one thing was certain—his duty was clear. He for one would not succumb to the paltry hopes of the easy life of a satisfied slave, a humoured and patted dependant of an alien master who had smashed the throne of his nation and battered down the altar of his Gods. He for one would risk all and work and fight and, if need be, die in facing fearful odds for the ashes of his forefathers and the temples of his Gods; or, if he be destined to win and survive and remain a victor in the field, then, he would lay the foundations of a great and glorious Hindu Empire, even as Vikramaditya or Salivahana did—an empire, that would be a notable realisation of the anxious dreams of generations of his people, of the object of the longing prayers of the saints and sages of his faith.

CHAPTER II

HINDAVI SWARAJ

"हिंदवी स्वराज्य"

Shivaji's Letter

THE youth rose in rebellion. He writes in 1645 A. D. to one of his compatriots severely protesting against the allegation of being faithless to the Shah of Vijapur, and appealed to superior morals by reminding him that the only faith they pledged was not to any Shah, but to God alone. Did he not in company

of Dadaji, his guardian, and his comrades solemnly swear in the presence of God on the summits of Sahyadri to fight to a finish and establish " Hindavi Swaraj," a Hindu-pad-padashahi in Hindustan? "God is on our side and He shall win!"

This word "Hindavi Swaraj," coming from the pen of Shivaji himself, reveals, as nothing else could have done, the very soul of the great movement that stirred the life and activities of Maharashtra for a hundred years and more. Even in its inception the Maratha rising was neither a parochial nor a personal movement altogether. It was essentially a Hindu movement in the defence of Hindu Dharma for the overthrow of the alien Muhammadan domination, for the establishment of an independent, powerful Hindu Empire.

It was not only the leader of the Marathas who was actuated by this patriotic zeal, but it was more or less shared throughout his camp and his country. The people were as fully conscious of the patriotic spirit that actuated the efforts of Shivaji, as he himself was. He was everywhere hailed as a deliverer of the Hindus.

And even those who still ranged themselves on the Muhammadan side were doing so either through their natural failure to conceive that a rebellion against the great Muhammadan Padishah could ever succeed, or through a natural hesitation to accept the lead of a raw and young enthusiast as Shivaji must have appeared to the more callous and calculating minds,

as well as to those who had vested personal interests in the permanence of the Muhammadan rule.

But to the Hindu people as a whole, not only in Maharashtra, but throughout the Deccan and even in the north, he was the one great champion of their cause, the chosen hero of his race who was destined to win the political independence of his Land and his Race. History, tradition and literature of that period teem with passages and events that give noble expression to this popular regard and appreciation which the mission and work of Shivaji, Ramdas and their generation won throughout Hindudom District after district, and town after town, longed and pressed for the coming of the Marathas under Shivaji and rejoiced to see the Muhammadan flag being torn asunder from its flagstaff and the sacred Geruva of the Marathas rise and wave triumphant in its stead.

To cite only one example to substantiate this statement, let us refer to the letter which the people of Savnoor sent to Shivaji when the Hindus of that district could no longer tolerate the Muhammadan rule. "We are groaning under the tyrannical sway of the aliens and our Dharma is trampled under foot. Come, oh champion of the Hindu Faith, come, oh destroyer of the wicked and the unbelieving aliens' rule! Here we are at the mercy of the Muhammadan general, Yusuf and his army who, because we sympathise with Thee and conspired to invite our Hindu compatriots under Thee, have made us prisoners in our own house

placed guards at our gates, and are trying to starve us out by interdicting food and water. So turn thy nights into days and come, oh Deliverer of the Hindu race !"

It is needless to state that Shivaji did not turn a deaf ear to this moving appeal of his co-religionists beyond the borders of Maharashtra. Hambirrao, the famous Maratha captain, hastened to the scene and, inflicting crushing defeats on the forces of Vijapur in more than one battlefield, delivered the Hindu from Muhammadan clutches and rid that district of their rule.

Having put in order his little Jahagir, comprising Puna and Supa, and organising the 12 mavals (districts) when he was but 14 to 16 years old, Shivaji, with his chosen band, took Torana and other important forts by tactful surprises and daring raids. After gaining one of his most decisive victories over the forces of Vijapur under Afjulkhan, Shivaji came in open conflict with the Moguls too. Having routed several of their Captains and Generals, now surrendering, now surprising, but always outwitting them, he struck such a terror in the hearts of his foes that even Aurangazeb thought it prudent to drop opposition for a while and lure him into a trap. But Shivaji proved more than a match even for an Aurangzeb in his intrigues, and frustrating his treacherous designs at Agra, escaped unscathed from captivity and reached Raigad safe. The war with the Moguls was resumed

and Singhad was recaptured by Shivaji. Several other Captains distinguished themselves by inflicting crushing defeats on the Muhammadans wherever they met, till at last Shivaji thought it prudent and safe to have himself formally crowned as the Hindu Chatrapati—the champion of Hindu dharma and Hindu civilization. Since the fall of Vijayanagar, never had a Hindu Prince dared to have himself crowned as an independent ruler, as a Chatrapati. This coronation broke the spell of Muhammadan superiority in arms. Never again did they prove a match for the Hindus in the battle-field.

The results seemed miraculous even to the actors themselves. Ramdas, himself the high priest and prophet of that War of Hindu Liberation, sings in one of his mystic utterances of the vision he had seen and triumphantly asserts that much of what he had seen in his vision had already come to pass. " In utter darkness I dreamt: behold the dreams are realised. Hindustan is up, has come by her own and those that hated her and sinned against God are put down with a strong hand. Verily, it is a holy land and happy. For God has made her cause, His own and Aurangzeb is down. The dethroned are enthroned and the enthroned are dethroned ! Actions speak better than words. Verily, Hindustan is a holy land and happy: now that Dharma is backed up by Rajdharma, Right by Might, the waters of Hind, no longer defiled, can enable us once more to perform our ablutions and austerities."

It was this consciousness of fighting under the banner of God that made Shivaji, when he succeeded in founding an independent Hindu Kingdom, to lay it all at the feet of his spiritual and political guide, Ramdas Swami. It is again this consciousness of a great mission that made Ramdas return it all to his illustrious disciple as a trust to be administered for the good of man and to the Glory of God, and declare :

"राज्य शिवाजिके नव्हे—राज्य धर्माचे आहे"

Witness again in what glowing terms the author of Chatraprakash, the historical poem that narrates the deeds of Chatrasal, though a Bundela Hindu by birth, as well as Bhushan, a great national poet who, though not himself a Maratha by birth, yet feels as much proud of the victorious march of the Maratha warriors from Shivaji to Bhajirao, and going up and down all over Hindustan roused all Hindustan into action and achievement in that War of Hindu Liberation, sings the deeds of Shivaji and his comrades, in what light they view his achievements. For want of space, we can cite only a line here and there :"

"काशिजीकी कलाजाति मथुरा माशेद होति ॥ शिवाजा न होते तो सुनत होत सबकी ॥ राखी हिंदुवानीं हिंदवानके तिलक राख्यो स्मृति जोर पुराण राख्यो वेद विधि सुनि में ॥ राखा रजपूति राजधानी राखो राजनकी धरामें धर्म राख्यो राख्यो गुण गुणांमें ॥भूषण सुकावेजीती हय मरहट्ट-

नकी देस देस किरत बखानी सुनि मै ॥ साहिके सुपूत शिवराज समशेर तेरी दिल्लीदल दाबिके दिवाल राखि दुनिमें॥

Thus the stirring appeal and the battle-song that the Maratha trumpet sounded from the summits of Sahyadri in the name of Hindu Dharma and Hindu-pad-padashahi touched and roused all Hinduism far beyond the borders of the Maharashtra and made them feel that the cause that was being fought out by the Maratha aimed at nothing short of the deliverance of the Hindu people and the Hindu land from the hated alien bondage.

CHAPTER III

A NATION SUCCEEDS SHIVAJI

" God, we enter our last flight
Thou dost know our cause is right
Make us march now in thy light
On to Victory !
Let us not thy wrath deserve
In the sacred cause we serve
Let us not from danger swerve
Teach us how to die !! "

SHIVAJI died in 1680 A. D. and Ramdas in 1681. They had achieved much, but much more had yet to be achieved. They two died, but even their death would not kill the movement they had brought into being. It was not based on the narrow and shifting foundation of an individual life. It had struck its roots deep into the life of the nation. This is one of the moss-

important features of the history of the Marathas, which we wish to emphasise and impress on the mind of our non-Maratha readers. As it is, the life and work of Shivaji and Ramdas being more or less known outside Maharashtra,and the latter part of Maratha history being more or less unknown or but vaguely and confusedly known, the general readers of Indian or Hindu history feel that Shivaji and Ramdas were the first and the last of Maratha patriots who aimed at the establishment of Hindu-pad-padashahi and champoined the cause of all Hindudom. Not only this ; but the general understanding of Maharashtra seems to be that the real history of the Marathas, not only began, but also ended with the life of Shivaji ; all that follows is confusion worse confounded by selfish and demoralised struggle of stray adventurous bands of freebooters. Both these supposition are utterly wrong. The fact is that the real greatness of Shivaji and Ramdas lay in the very fact that their movement, not only survived them long, but characters as able and patriotic, organisers and captains, heroes and martyrs, rose in hundreds and in an unbroken succession and fought for the same cause mightily, pressing towards the same goal of Hindu-pad-padashahi, and achieved such glorious results as would have dazzled the eagle eye of Shivaji himself. When Shivaji was crowned he had hardly a province under him, and yet it was a great achievement. But was it not an achievement, signal and great, when his successors under Raghoba

Dada entered Lahore and the Maratha horse pranced triumphantly on the banks of the Indus and a continental country lay at their feet? When Shivaji died, Aurangzeb still lived. It was not Shivaji, but his Maratha Nation, that at last sueceeded in burying down Aurangzeb and his anti-Hindu ambitions in a common grave at Ahmednagar. The seed that fell at Raigad had become so noteworthy on account of the imposing tree into which our empire grew. Otherwise, it would have proved barren and been lost into the dust of oblivion like so many other seeds that never grew into fruitful trees. Shivaji ruled at Raigad; but the day was yet to come when his people would rule at Delhi. Nay, had not Dhanaji and Santaji, Balaji and Baji, Nana and Bhau, Malharirao and Dattaji, Madhavarao and Parusharam Pant, Nana and Bapu risen, thought, fought and won his cause, the results that Shivaji achieved would have seemed so bald and unimposing as those of the founders of some small principalities, like thePatwardhan or the Budella states, and could not have claimed such unparalleled and Pan-Hindu significance in the history of our Hindu race. Shivaji is great, because his nation proved worthy of his greatness, could grasp and press on his mission to ultimate success could realise what he could merely hope, could accomplish what he could merely aspire to. The death of Shivaji was the mere beginning of Maratha history. He founded a Hindu principality—it had yet to grow into a Hindu

Empire. This was all done after the death of Shivaji. The real epic opens as soon as Shivaji, after calling into being the great forces that had to act it up, disappears from the scene.

CHAPTER IV

A ROYAL MARTYR

"धर्मासाठी मरावे" ॥

Ramadas

AURANGZEB was himself mistaken in sounding the depth of Maharashtra Dharma and the vitality it had breathed into the movement of Hindu Revival in Maharashtra. Like so many other movements, personal or parochial, he thought the Maratha movement too, must have received its death-blow at the death of its able leader Shivaji and by the fact of his being succeeded by his brave but incapable son Sambhaji; so Aurangzeb thought his opportunity had come. With the vast resources of an Empire at his command in men and money from Kabul to Bengal, he descended into the Deccan with an army estimated at about three lakhs of all arms. Even Shivaji had never to face such overwhelming forces at a stretch. Aurangzeb was not wrong in his calculations, for the whole of the weight of the Mogul Empire thus masterfully concentrated could have crushed a kingdom ten times as large as the new and disorganised Maratha state. To make any attempt to resist the Moguls

yet more hopeless, the Marathas had for their leader a man quite incapable of guiding a great nation. In addition to this incapacity to lead, Sambhaji had a bad temper, excessive indulgence in drinking and debauchery.

But in spite of all these drawbacks and failure to rise equal to the occasion in life, the son of Shivaji proved worthy of his father and of the national movement which he had to represent in rising, not only equal, but even superior to circumstances in the hour of his death. Even when he stood a hopeless prisoner in the front of his ferocious foes, he stood erect and refused to barter his religion for his life. He indignantly refused to accept the alternative to death of embracing Islam, and,affirming allegiance to the faith of his forefathers, hurled insult for insult against the Muslim persecutors, their logic and their theology. Finding it impossible to tame the Maratha lion into a lap-dog, Aurangzeb ordered to put the "kaffir" to death. But the threats failed to overawe the son of Shivaji. His eyes were pierced and pulled out by red-hot iron pincers, his tongue was cut out piecemeal. But still it all failed to overawe the royal martyr. At last he was beheaded, falling a victim to Muslim fanaticism, but bringing eternal glory to the Hindu race. Sambhaji, by this one act of supreme self-sacrifice, represented the spirit of Maharashtra Dharma—of the great Hindu Revival—as nothing else could have done. A leader of free-

booters would have acted otherwise. All the material gains of Shivaji were lost beyond hope. His treasury was emptied out, his castles were dismantled and destroyed, his very capital fell into the hands of the alien foes. Sambhaji could not prevent it all. Sambhaji could not preserve the material gains of Shivaji. But Sambhaji, by his great martyrdom, not only preserved, but added immensely to the brilliance and strength of Shivaji's moral and spiritual gains. The War of Hindu Liberation gained mightily in grandeur and moral strength, when it could thus feed itself on the blood of its royal martyr to the Hindu faith.

CHAPTER V

THE ROYAL MARTYR AVENGED

मरोनि अवध्यांसि मारावें मारितांमारितां ध्यावें राज्य आपले

Ramadas

THE whole Maratha nation rose in arms to avenge the death of their king, whose misdeeds and mistakes were readily forgotten and forgiven in this his last greatest act of self-abnegation. They resolved, resourceless and penniless, to secure their national independence, and assembling together under he p residency of their leader Rajaram, the second son of Shivaji, solemnly swore to fight and die in defence of their Hindu faith and Hindu Rajya. The teachings of Ramdas—

'धर्मीसाठीं मरावें । मरोनि अवध्यासि मारावें ॥
मरीतां मारितां ध्यावें । राज्य आपुले ॥१॥
मराठा तितुका मेळवावा ।
आपुला राष्ट्रधर्म वाढवावा ॥
ये विशीं न करितां तकवा । पूर्वेज हांसति ॥२॥

were not forgotten after his death; but, on the contrary, became the living faith of a whole people. Rajaram Nilomoreshwar, Prahlad Niraji, Ramachandra Pant, Shankarji Malhar, Parusaram Trimbuk, Santaji Gospade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Khanderao Dabhade, Pandhar Panar, Nimbalkar Nemaji, Parsopi, Brahmins, Marathas, Prabhus, princes, and peasants—it was a nation that rose in arms against the Muhammadan foe.

All Deccan had by this time fallen back into the hands of Aurangzeb. All Maharashtra with all its castles and even the capital of Shivaji, was groaning under the military sway of Muhammadan commanders. It seemed as if Shivaji and his generation had fought and died in vain. But what of castles and capitals! The strongest castle that a nation determined to win its independence can have is the castle of its heart; its ideal is its flag and wherever it flies there lies its capital. "If all Maharashtra is lost, let us carry the fight to Madras: if Raigad fall, let us plant the banner of Hindu-pad-padashahi at Jinji: but let us not give up the struggle." With such undying resistance the Marathas faced the

mighty forces of Aurangzeb for some 20 years or so, and ultimately sent him back broken, discomfited and disillusioned, to die in agony at Ahmednagar in 1707.

The peculiar tactics of war which go by the name of Maratha warfare—Ganimi kava—stood them in good stead in this long-drawn war. The Maratha forces rallied and dispersed, sallied forth and retired, marched and moved, fought and fled, hurried and held out, with such lightning-like rapidity and matchless generalship and dogged bravery and daring that the Moguls were harassed and beaten by the Marathas everywhere, but could not fix them anywhere. Every renowned Moslem general was defeated or disgraced, captured or killed. Zulficar Khan, Ali Masdan Khan, Himmat Khan, Kassam, everyone suffered crushing defeats at the hands of Dhanaji, Santaji and other Maratha generals who in great pitched battles at Jinji, Kaveripak, Dhundhari, and several other places cut whole Moslem armies to pieces and ultimately destroyed the ambitions of Aurangzeb to re-conquer Maharashtra. The Marathas marched straight against the Imperial Camp and literally bearded the lion in his den. The Emperor would have been captured alive, had he not by a stroke of fortune been absent from his imperial golden tents which the Marathas cut off and carried away in triumph.

To illustrate the patriotic spirit that animated the chief actors in this period, it is enough to refer to

the attempt of Khando Ballal to win over the few Maratha nobles who still sided with the Moguls and took part in pressing the siege of Jinji. Secret negotiations were opened with Nagoji Raji to convert him to the Maratha cause. It was explained to him how it was easy to destroy the Muhammadan forces at Jinji, if but he would join Rajaram, and how it was his duty to help the Marathas in their attempt to defend the land and the Faith of their forefathers. This appeal did not fail to win over Nagoji Raji who took the first opportunity of deserting the Moslem camp with 5,000 followers and joined the Maratha forces. Thereupon, Khando Ballal decided to persuade even Shirka who still remained in the Mogul's service. But Shirka grew indignant at the mention of Rajaram's danger and rejoined: "What do I care, if not only Rajaram, but the whole family of the Bhonsles, are wiped out from this earth? Has not Sambhaji massacred wherever a Shirka was found? Has not the word Shirkan become a synonym for massacre?" Thereupon Khando Ballala persuasively put in: "Listen friend! What you say is all true. But is it not also true that Sambhaji had three members of my family trampled to death under the feet of elephants? But then the present question is not of family feuds. We are fighting here, not for the elevation of the Bhonsles, or of any other individual or family, but for the defence of the Commonwealth of the Hindus:

" हिदूंच्या साम्राज्यसाठीं आह्मीं झटत आहो !"
Shirka could no longer resist this appeal to his national feeling. He forgave and forgot his private wrongs and family feuds, and promised to help Rajaram to escape from the Moguls and rendered most valuable services, when at last Rajaram slipped out of the Mogul lands and re-entered Maharashtra in triumph.

Thus not only the generation of Shivaji, but the generations after him, were animated by the same noble spirit of patriotism, the consciousness of continuing the same sacred mission of winning back the political independence of the Hindu race and defending the Hindu Dharma from the attacks of an alien and barbarous foe. Mere freebooters and plunderers could not have obtained success in such a war against such a foe. It was a great moral and national force that braved and nerved and enabled the patriots of the generations to accomplish the deliverance of their country from a danger which no other race in India had been able to withstand.

CHAPTER VI

MAHARASHTRA MANDAL

" आहे तितुकें जतन करावें पुढें आणिक मेळवावें
महाराष्ट्र राज्यचि करावें जिकडे तिकडे "

Ramadas

WHILE Aurangzeb, weighed down with the wreck of all his hopes and anti-Hindu ambitions, sank in a gloomy grave, the Marathas carried the war far and wide into the Mogul territories of Khandesh, Gondvan, Berar and even Gujarat. The release of Shahu, the formal recognition by the Mogul Emperor of the claims of the Marathas to Swaraj in Maharashtra proper and to Chowth and Sardeshmukhi over the six Subhas of the Deccan, as well as in the tributary states of Mysore and Travancore, strengthened the hands of the Marathas as never before, and gave them breathing time to put their house in order and dress their wounds of fierce party passions and the centripetal tendencies and interests and to constitute the Marathas into an organised whole, which, with all its inherent and perhaps inevitable weaknesses, gave so splendid an account of itself that the "Maharashtra Mandala" or the Maratha Confederacy actually became the Hindu-pad-padashahi and ruled, not in name but in fact, all over Hindustan.

To these weaknesses and these drawbacks that we have just referred to as being inherent in the Maratha Confederacy, because they were the inevitable results

of the faults or foibles of the national character and institutions which the Marathas shared in common with all other Hindus, we will return later on. It is enough to state here to avoid all misunderstanding, that no one can be more conscious of them than we are. In tracing and illustrating the great national and moral principles that propelled the Marathas as a nation, inspired and sustained them in their Herculean efforts to win the War of Hindu Liberation, we do not forget or mean to minimise the fact that, at times and in individual cases, selfish and even vile aims, personal pique, unbridled avarice, got better of their national duty and inclinations. Had it not been so, they would have been a nation of angels and not of men. But here we are concerned, not with what is true in details here and there, but mainly with what is true of the great Hindu movement in general, as a whole; with the outstanding superiority of the great task they had undertaken, the national grandeur of their efforts and their sacrifices and the measure of success they attained—all of which, even when due allowance is made for individual stray aberrations, cannot fail to elicit grateful homage and appreciation from every patriotic Hindu. This too we had attempted to do as far as possible in this summary sketch by quoting unimpeachable evidence, by citing at times the very words and illustrating them by the deeds of the chief leaders and actors themselves who led the national movement.

Balaji Vishvanath, having thus put his house in order, found himself in a position so strong as to play an effective part even in the imperial politics at Delhi. The Marathas no longer stood in danger of any great Moslem offensive against them, and the Moslem Emperor himself craved their protection against his own rebellious generals and ministers—so completely had the Maratha war of independence broken the power of the Moslem Empire. In 1718 A.D. the Marathas, 50,000 strong, marched forth to Delhi under Balaji Vishvanath and Dhabade to assert the claims of the Sayyad brothers against their Moslem rivals at the court, as the Sayyads had acknowledged the Maratha claims to levy Chowth and Sardeshmukhi throughout the Deccan. The Muhammadans at Delhi very naturally resented to see the hated Hindus enter the capital at the head of 50,000 Marathas. So they conspired to waylay and kill the chief of the Marathas, if ever he succeeded in exacting the Imperial Sanads confirming the Maratha claims to Swaraj and Chowth. When this was known in the Maratha camp, Bhanu came forth and offered to risk his life to shield that of his chief and die for him if need be. So it was arranged that Balaji Peshwa should, after getting the Sanads, leave the Durbar and proceed by an unusual route under cover to the Maratha camp ; while Bhanu should personate him and, occupying Balaji's palanquin, march with due ceremony by the usual route. The Muham-

madan fanatical mob, watching the palanquin of the Peshwa as usual, suddenly fell on it, and with overwhelming numbers cut the few Marathas to pieces, including Bhanu, whom they took for the real Balaji: while Balaji with the state documents under his arm reached the Maratha camp in safety. Such sacrifices of one's life in the interests of one's Nation raise the story of that Nation to epic grandeur and greatness. Still in a summary sketch like this, we can but cite a case here and there, feeling sure that even one such case illustrates the national and moral greatness of the movement far more effectively than volumes of detailed and dry criticism can do.

CHAPTER VII

THE APPEARANCE OF BAJIRAO ON THE SCENE

Independent Maharashtra must lead the War of Hindu Independence.

"Who for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fall
Let him on with me!
By oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free !!
Lay the proud usurpers low,
Tyrants fall in every foe
Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do or die !!!

AFTER his return from Delhi, Balaji Vishwanath

died in 1720 A. D., and his son Baji Rao became the leader of the Maratha Confederacy, presided over by Shahu. After the birth of Shivaji, the second great personal event that constitutes a landmark in the history of the Marathas is the appearance of Baji Rao on the political scene. Great questions of policy were then hanging in the balance. The political independence of Maharashtra was won. The Marathas had grown into a power so strong and so organised as to be able to stand on their feet and defend their land and their Faith against all odds; and if they dabbled no more in the imperial politics and confined their aspirations to Maharashtra alone, it was to enjoy peacefully what they had won. Such thoughts very naturally suggested themselves to a few Maratha leaders and they tried to impress these on the mind of Shahu Chatrapati himself. Even if they had succeeded in convincing the nation and persuaded the people to refrain from carrying the War of Hindu Liberation beyond the borders of Maharashtra, it is very doubtful if they could have lived long in peaceful enjoyment of what they had won. But even if they could have held Maharashtra against all comers and lived an isolated political life, unconcerned with whatsoever happened outside Maharashtra the question was, should they have done so? Why had they fought and bled for the last two or three generations so bitterly and so profusely? Not for mere peace and enjoyment. And could that have

been ever an honorable peace and enjoyment which could listen with guilty equanimity to the shrieks of their oppressed Hindu brethren outside of Maharashtra? Shivaji and his comrades aimed at an "HINDAVI SWARAJ," and not only at a "Marathi Rajya."

The Hindus of Maharashtra were freed from the foreign yoke; but there remained millions upon millions of their Hindu brethren who were still groaning under it in other parts of India. Ramdas had enjoined "धर्मासाठीं मरावें" and bewailed that तीर्थक्षेत्रें भ्रष्ट झालीं! But how can the Marathas feel themselves acquitted of their mission of fighting and dying in defence of their Dharma when the crescent still waved triumphantly on the Temple of Vishveshvar at Kashi, and how can the mission of Shivaji of Hindavi Swaraj, of Hindu-pad-padshahi, be said to have been fulfilled when the alien sat on the Hindu Throne of Yudhistir at Delhi? The Marathas had driven the Muhammadan crescent from Pandharpur, and Nasik was no longer open to the insults of Moslem fanatics. But what of Kashi? Of Kurukshetra? Of Haridwar? Of Rameshwar? Of Gangasagar? Were they not as sacred to the Marathas as Pandharpur or Nasik? The ashes of their forefathers had fallen not in the Godavari alone, but in the Ganges as well, the temples of their Gods stood scattered from the Himalayas to Rameshwar, from Dwarka to Jagannath. But the waters of the Jumna and the Ganga were

still, to quote Ramdas, 'defiled and unfit for the ablutions of the faithful as they still reflected the triumphant crescent of the Moslem conqueror.' Ramdas bitterly complained प्रस्तुत यवनांचे बंड । हिंदु उरला नाहीं चड ॥१॥ and charged the Marathas to

धर्मासाठीं मरावं । मरोनि अवघ्यासी मारावं॥
मारितां मारितां घ्यावें राज्य आपलें ॥ १॥

But did that tyrannyical Sceptre of the Moslem break, and had all Hindustan shaken and smashed the chains of political and religious servitude as yet? Hindu Dharma cannot rule triumphant, nor can Hindavi Rajya flourish, unless and until the Moslem supremacy and strength were smashed, not only in Maharashtra but throughout Hindustan. As long as there remained an inch of Hindu soil under the Muhammadan sway, so long the mission of Shivaji and Ramdas, and the generations that fought and fell in the war of independence for the past fifty years or so, must remain incomplete and unfulfilled. "Then ye, who rose proclaiming loud that ye will not sheath your sword till ye had cut asunder the chains that hold your Hindu Land and your Hindu Race in abject subjection, till ye made it safe for all Hindus to practise their faith unmolested and till ye have consolidated them into a great and powerful Hindu Empire—how can ye sheath that sword and sink back into an ignoble peace, while a mosque is rising on the ruins of the temple of

Vishveshwar at Kashi, the alien horse crosses unchecked and unopposed the sacred waters of the Sindhu and the alien sails float triumphant on the waves of the Hindu seas? It is a crucial test—if indeed this great movement was ushered into being for no parochial, no provincial, not to speak of personal, ends, but for Hindu Dharma and a Hindavi Swaraj, Hindu-pad-padashahi, then pour out, ye Marathas in your hundreds and your thousands, and carry this sacred Geruwa banner across the Narmada, across the Chambal, across the Jumma and the Ganges and the Indus and the Brahmaputra, down to the seas! And even as Ramdas has exhorted you to strive, strive."

" देव मस्तकीं धरावा । अवघा हलकल्लळ करावा ॥
मुलूख बडवा बुडवावा । धर्म संस्थापने साठीं " ॥ १ ॥

Thus argued the great leaders of thought and of action, warriors and statesmen, saints and sages of Maharashtra. Baji Rao, Chimaji Appa, Bahmendra Swami, the Dixits, Mathurabai Angre and several other leaders were animated by these motives and pressed for further expansion of the Maratha activities. It was not only a question of what ought to be done, but even of what must be done. Maharashtra could not, even if she would, remain in political isolation. The fate of the Hindus of Maharashtra was indissolubly bound with that of their co-religionists and countrymen on the banks of the Indus on the North and the shores of the seas in the south.

The political acuteness of the Maratha statesmen could not fail to see that it was the provincial, parochial spirit of isolation that led in the past, first to the political and, consequently, to the racial and religious ruin of the Hindu race. If possible they would now strive to make a Pan-Hindu stand. That is what Baji Rao wrote to the various Hindu princes when Nadir Shah invaded India. Moreover it was not only the spiritual or the emotional necessity of their National being, but their material and individual interests too demanded that they should neither rest nor retire from the field, till they carried their aspirations towards political independence to its logical conclusion, and founded a great and mighty empire that would hold together and consolidate the whole Hindu race. No Hindu could remain long in peace and realise his ideals so long as his race was dominated by alien supremacy, and no Hindu could grow to the full height of his being, so long as his race was condemned to servile stuntedness under the overgrowth of alien tyranny. For all these reasons, not only these leaders, but even the rank and file in the Maratha camp, were fully alive to the fact that they would not be able to rule at Satara unless they ruled at Delhi too. On the memorable occasion when the leaders of the Maratha Confederacy assembled together under the presidency of Shahu to decide this momentous question of the future policy of the Marathas Baji Rao rose up and gave expression to this

the deepest conviction and aspiration of his people when he, conscious of his own power and enthusiasm and the sublimity of his theme, exclaimed : "Towards Delhi ! Towards Delhi will we press and strike straight at the root of this growth of Moslem Swaraj. Why stand ye hesitating and faltering here ! Press on, ye Hindu warriors, ahead; the hour of Hindu-pad-padashahi has come ! Impossible ? Oh, no. I have measured my sword against theirs and I know their mettle. I ask for nothing more, neither men nor money, from thee, Chatrapati. Only sanction this and bless me, Oh King, and I shall go straight and strike and bring down this old noxious growth root and branch."

The most irresistable eloquence in this world is the eloquence of a warrior. Shahu Chatrapati, thrilling with emotion, felt the blood of Shivaji rise in him and replied : " Go, hero of my people. Go and lead my armies from victory to victory to whatever direction thou chooseth. What of Delhi! Take thou this, our sacred Geruwa banner, and plant it triumphantly on the summits of the Himalayas and further—even in the 'Kinnar Khand!' And which was this Geruwa banner that Shahu referred to ? It was decked, not in gold, not in silver, but in the Sanyasin's Geruwa--the colour that is the emblem of renuniciation, of devotion to God, of service to Man. The Maratha armies followed this Geruwa banner. This was given to them as a constant reminder of their mission, of the great ideal

that should lead them on as Defenders of the Hindu Faith and Liberators of the Hindu Race from the alien yoke. Bhavani was their sword, Bhagava was their banner. Ramdas raised it, Shivaji fought under it and planted it on the summits of Sahyadri, and now Shahu and his generation had resolved to carry it aloft to the very confines of " Kinnar Khand."

The Assembly broke up and the history of the Maratha Confederacy became the History of Hindustan.

CHAPTER VIII

FORWARD TO DELHI !

" अरे बघतां काय ! चला जोरानें चालु करून !
हिंदुपदपादशाहीस आतां उशीर काय ! "

Baji Rao.

HOW thoroughly Baji Rao and his companions were brought up in the traditions of Shivaji and how closely they had studied the political policy and military strategy of that great leader could best be seen both in the eloquent appeal Baji Rao made to the Maratha leaders in the presence of Shahu, in which he expressly drew a telling comparison between the arduous circumstances under which Shivaji strove to carry the War of Hindu Liberation to the South and the relatively more favourable turn the events had taken since then, when his generation, instead of daring more in carrying the war to the North, sat doubting and deliberating,

as well as in the splendid campaigns against the Nizam, Bangesh and other Mogul generals. The first thing he had to do was to humble the opposition of the Nizam who was the most capable of Muhammadan generals and statesmen of his time.

Baji Rao soon proved himself as worthy a student and follower of Shivaji on the field, as he had done in his aspirations and eloquence in the Council Chamber. On the 7th of August, 1727, when it was raining in torrents, Baji Rao led his army to the field. Entering Aurangabad he first levied war contributions on Jalna and the districts round about it which were held by the Nizam. As soon as the Nizam's forces under Ewaz Khan advanced to meet him, Baji Rao, engaging them half-heartedly a while and suddenly, outmarching his opponents, rushed toward Mahur and thence to Aurangabad, giving it out that he would extract a heavy contribution from that city. The Nizam hastened to join Ewaz Khan with a view to protect that wealthy city. But Baji Rao, seeing his ruse succeed and the Nizam completely misled, left Khandesh and entering Gujarat informed the Mogul Viceroy there with grim humour that he was invading that province under the Nizam's orders.

The Nizam, hastening towards Aurangabad, learnt to his dismay that the enemy he wanted to protect that city from was already in Gujarat. Furious at this he wanted to beat back Baji Rao with his own weapons by imitating the Maratha tactics of surprise

marches, to invade Poona, and plunder Baji Rao's territory as he went. But he was too late in learning his lessons of Maratha strategy. For Baji Rao, anticipating all this, had already left Gujarat and with lightning rapidity entered the Nizam's dominions again.

While the Nizam was advancing towards Poona and fancying he was performing a splendid military feat, he learnt, to his utter discomfiture, that, before he could plunder Baji Rao's territory, Baji Rao had already plundered his. So abandoning his plan of marching on Poona, he hastened to meet Baji Rao along the banks of the Godavari. The Nizam's forces were by now thoroughly tired out, and Baji Rao wanted to give them battle even though the Nizam did not wish to do so. Instead of flying away and avoiding them as before, Baji Rao by skilful manoeuvres succeeded in tempting the Moguls to occupy a position near Palkhed almost at his bidding. Now Baji Rao suddenly took the offensive, as cleverly as up till now he was avoiding it, and the Nizam in spite of his big guns and heavy artillery, was completely caught and found it to his dismay that it was impossible to shake off the Marathas, and that either he should consent to the utter destruction of his forces, or agree to whatever Baji Rao dictated. The Nizam chose the latter course and recognised Shahu as the sole King of the Marathas and agreed to the payment of all arrears of Chowth and Sardeshmukhi and to the

re-instatement of all the Maratha revenue officers in his own dominions.

Reference has been made in detail to this campaign, for this is a typical example of the Maratha warfare and shows that lessons that Shivaji had taught them were not only not forgotten, but improved upon and successfully employed on the fields of battle in a far more extensive and intensive way by the Maratha generals that followed him.

Nor did the Mogul Viceroy of Malva fare better than the Moghul Viceroy of the Deccan did. The Marathas, ever since 1698 when Udaji Pawar raided Malva and camped at Mandw, were attacking the Mogul forces in that province from several sides. The Hindus of that province were so disgusted with the Moslem tyranny and religious oppression that the wave of Hindu national revival that preceded the War of Hindu Liberation did not fail to find enthusiastic advocates of Hindu-pad-padashahi in Malva. The Hindu people at large, led by their natural leaders, the landlords, the Thakurs, and the priests of Malva, saw, in the growing power of the Marathas and the great ideal of a Hindu Empire that informed and inspired their actions, the only hope of their country's freedom from the foreign yoke.

Fortunately for the Hindus the most influential prince in Malva was one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the cause of Hindu Independence. He was Sawai Jaisingh, prince of Jaipur. The wisdom

of Chatrasal, who when he found himself unable to defend the freedom of his little kingdom against the alien foe and was faced with the grim alternative of being reduced to vassalage to a Hindu sovereign or to 'prosper' under a Muhammadan and Non-Hindu alien, patriotically chose rather to lose his little provincial self and indentify himself with the movement of a Pan-Hindu Empire, whether that was led by the Marathas or the Rajputs or the Sikhs or any other Hindu section than to live by kneeing at the Muhammadan throne at Delhi. This wisdom of Chatrasal guided Jaisingh too.

Jaisingh championed the cause of all the oppressed Hindus of Malva—of peasants and landlords groaning under overtaxation, of Thakurs and priests who could no longer tolerate the insolent extortion, humiliation and insult of their Faith and their race, which the existence of Moslem rule made inevitable —and advised them all to invite the Marathas to free them and found a Hindu Rajya. The noble Rajput was patriotic enough to see that, of all Hindu princes then ruling, the only organised Hindu power that could cope with and crush the Moguls and consolidate the Hindus was the power of the Maratha Confederacy. If he could not take the lead and free the Hindus from the Mogul yoke, the next best thing for him to do was to sacrifice his personal ambitions, suppress all thoughts of mean,unpatriotic and parochiial jealousy and help those who could and would do it.

Jaisingh was enthusiastically backed up in this plan by the influential Thakur Nandalal Mandavi. They, on behalf of the Hindus of Malva, opened negotiations with the Marathas and invited them to Malva "to drive the Mlechhas and vindicate the honour of Hinduism." The Marathas readily responded to this call of their co-religionists in Malva, and soon the province was attacked on all sides by the Maratha captains under Chimaji Appa, the brave brother of Baji Rao. The Mogul Viceroy mustered all the forces he could, but the Marathas showed no mind to retire and, finding a favourable opportunity, they all suddenly attacked the Moslems and at a battle at Dewas killed their Viceroy.

But the Emperor did not like to part with one of the richest provinces, so easily as that. A new Viceroy was sent to give battle to the Marathas and there the Malva Hindus who sympathised with the Marathas joined their ranks. The Mogul Viceroy laid terrible plans, and with the help of his huge army tried to destroy the Marathas in the passes of Mandava Ghat and other places. But the Marathas outwitted him completely with the help of the Malva Hindus, and, under Malharrao and Pillaji and Chimaji Appa, harrassed the Mogul forces as never before and ultimately offered them terrible battle at Tiral where the Mussalmans were completely crushed and their Viceroy killed.

The joy of the Hindus of Malva at the news of this

second success knew no bounds. The Marathas were welcomed wherever they went, and the sight of a triumphant Hindu banner—witnessed after centuries of defeat and discomfiture—sent a thrill through the hearts of the Hindus, a feeling of patriotic elevation and racial rejoicing.

Jaiasingh himself writes in one of his graceful letters thanking all the actors for fighting out the sacred cause and congratulating the Marathas upon the success they achieved. "A thousaud thanks! Splendidly indeed you have won! You have driven the alien out and delivered the Hindus of Malva and vindicated the honor of our Hindu Dharma and Hindu race."

The Marathas soon restored order, dismissed all Mogul officers and began to administer the province as a regular part of the Maratha Empire.

But the Moghul Emperor at Delhi persisted in hoping against hope, and sent a new Viceroy named Muhammad Khan Bangash, a brave Rohilla Pathan, who was so renowned amongst Muhammadan circles for his martial qualifications as to win the title of "The Lion of War." From the Imperial Court he was specially charged to crush the rising spirit of the Bundella chief, Chatrasal, first and then from that vantage point to expel the Marathas from Malva.

Muhammad Khan Bangash attaked the Bundellas who, led by their illustrious chief Chatrasal, had shaken off the fetters of Moslem rule and had been

living a free political life, Chatrasal was a great admirer of Shivaji, who was the source of his inspiration and whom in his youth he had acknowledged as his master and guide. Since then he, faithful to the advice of his master to carry the mission of Hindu liberation to Bundelkhand, strove so mightily and successfully to free that province from the foreign rule and defend Hindu Dharma and Hindu Desha as to earn the title of—" the shield of Hindudom"—from his countrymen.

Now in his old age he found himself face to face with fierce hordes of the Rohilla Pathans in overwhelming numbers, bent on crushing his little Hindu kingdom. It was but natural for an old Hindu warrior like Chatrasal, brought up in the Pan-Hindu spirit of Shivaji, Ramdas and Prannath Prabhu, to turn instinctively to Baji Rao who, as the leader of the Maratha Confederacy, represented not only the strength but even the mission of Shivaji. He wrote a pathetic letter to Baji Rao appealing to those tender traditions of Hindu mythology, which more than any thing else roused the deepest sentiments in every Hindu heart of a common Hindu Brotherhood and a Pan-Hindu spirit.

" Come, oh Baji! and deliver me from the clutches of this faithless foe, even as Vishnu saved the Gajendra. "

This old friend and disciple of Shivaji, being beset by the Moslems when he turned to the Marathas for

help as a Hindu to a Hindu, could not but rouse them to mighty patriotic efforts. With breathless speed Baji Rao, with Malharrao and Pilajī Jadhav and twelve other Maratha generals marched out at the head of 70,000 men. Meeting the old Hindu hero, Chatrasal at Dhamurahe, he picked up the remnants of the Bundela forces with him and continued his march, though the rainy season had set in.

Muhammad Khan, puffed up with the easy victories he had won over the little Hindu kingdom of Chatrasal whom he had driven from his capital, thought himself entitled, during the rainy season, to a rest which a victor deserved. While he was thus living in a fool's paradise, the Hindu armies, paying no heed to the torrential rains, dense forests and forbidding mountains, suddenly fell upon Muhammad Khan Bangash and held him fast in their clutches at Jaitpur (in 1729). Beseiged, beaten and defeated so thoroughly by the Marathas was the Moslem 'lion of war' that to save his very life he had to ignominously flee from the battlefield, leaving all Bundelkhand and Malva in the hands of the triumphant Hindus. The old Bundella King re-entered his capital in full state, amidst the welcoming cheers of the citizens and the defeaning boom of the victorious Mahratta canons.

So grateful did the old hero feel towards the Marathas that he adopted Baji Rao as his third son. On his death, true to this, a third portion of his kingdom was actually handed over to Baji Rao. This touching

incident in itself is enough to prove how noble had been the underlying principles that formed the spring of their actions and made the Hindus of Baji Rao's generation rise above personal or parochial considerations and feel themselves bound together by ties of blood and race and religion, and inspired them to mighty efforts to achieve political independence and found a great Hindu Empire.

The flight of this third Muhammadan Viceroy from Malva and Bundelkhand made the Marathas master of those regions and provided them with a vantage point from which they aimed to carry the War of Hindu Liberation into the very heart of the Mogul Empire.

While these campaigns were being fought out in Malva and Bundelkhand, the Maratha arms and statesmanship were achieving results as great and abiding in Gujarat. Pilaji Gaikwad, Kanthaji Bande and later on Chimaji Appa himself kept on harassing the Mogul forces in Guzerat so strenuously as to force the Moghul Viceroy to sign a treaty by which he agreed to pay Chowth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas. But the Mogul Emperor, indignant at this humiliating engagement, sent Abhayasing and charged him to drive the Marathas out of Gujarat. Abhayasingh, unlike Jaisingh, was out for himself and his self-glorification, and this tendency made him blind to the fact that he was in no way better equipped to take the lead of the Hindus

in their struggle for political independence than any other Hindu prince. The Maratha Confederacy was the only Hindu power which had shown itself capable of achieving this noble task. But Abhaya-singh's love for personal advancement made him blind to this fact and drove him so far in his opposition to the Marathas in Gujarat as to invite Pilaji Gaikwad, under the pretext of negotiations, to the city of Dakore—a spot sacred to the Hindus and therefore safe from suspicions—and, in spite of its sanctity and the pledged word of a Rajput, get him assassinated. But he soon realised that he was guilty, not only of a crime, but a great blunder.

For the Marathas were not the people who could be cowed down by the murder of a leader here or there. War and battle and death were their playmates from their youth, and for generations they had grown in the camp.

It should be noted that as in the Bundelkhand and Malva, so in Gujarat, the Hindus as often invited and usually sympathised with the Marathas and at times actively fought under their banner. For the very Kolies, Bhils, Waghries and other martial Hindu tribes in Gujarat were fiercely enraged at the murder of Pilaji, whom they loved, and rose to avenge his blood against the Mogul forces. The Marathas poured in from all sides , took Baroda by storm in 1732 A. D., made it what still it is, the Maratha capital of that province, and made it imposible for Abhayasing to

maintain his ground ; while Damaji Gaikwad invaded Jodhpur itself and forced Abhayasing to hasten back to the defence of his hereditary principality. Damaji thereupon whirled round, and soon took Ahmedabad itself, and rendered it, not only impossible, but even unnecessary for the Mogul viceroy to return to Gujarat again, as that whole province was lost to the Moslem empire about 1735.

CHAPTER IX

TO FREE THE HINDU SEAS

"आरमार स्वतंत्र एक राज्यांगच आहे. ज्याचें जवळ आरमार त्याचा समुद्र........जलदुर्गसहित होते त्यास नूतनच जलदुर्ग करून परभाविले:"

Ramchandra Pant Amatya

WHILE the Marathas were thus carrying the War of Hindu Liberation into the very heart of the Mogul empire to free the Hindu land, they were no less strenuously striving to free the Hindu seas, too, from the domination of the foreigners that threatened them from the West. They had very early realised that the safety of the Hindu empire was threatened as much by the European mercantile nations that visited their seas, as it was by the Moslems who had already made themselves masters of their lands. How thoroughly Shivaji and his generation were bent on checking and frustrating European ambition

and greed on the western coasts could best be seen in the clear rules and the line of policy enunciated in the famous treatise on "State Policy"* written by the distinguished Maratha leader and statesman, Ramchandra Pant, and issued for general information by the orders of the Maratha cabinet as a state document. Shivaji strove as strenuously to free the coastline of all foreign domination as he could under the circumstances, and laid the foundation of a strong Maratha Navy, backing it up by a line of newly built and powerfully equipped sea fortresses, which were destined to defend and guard the freedom of the Hindu seas for a century to come.

In the days of Rajaram, when Aurangzeb overran all the Deccan and the Marathas were no longer able to conduct an organised concentrated state, each began to fight against the common foe as best he could and wherever he could, the responsibility of driving the Moguls from the coastline fell on the shoulders of Kanhoji Angre, the Gujars and other distinguished Maratha Admirals. They discharged their duties so well that neither the English, nor the Portuguese, nor the Dutch, nor the Siddis nor the Moguls could neither singly nor, as at times happened, combinedly, check or kill the rising naval power of the Marathas. The English had to suffer much as Kanhoji Angre, the admiral of the Maratha fleet, was in possession of the island of Khanderi only sixteen miles south of the

Bombay harbour. They knew that the Maratha Admiral would make short work of them if he was left free from the Moslem power of the Siddi of Janjira and the extensive sway which the Portuguese held over the Western coasts long before the rise of the Maratha power.

To retain his possessions against all these enemies Kanhoji Angre was obliged to maintain a large force, and to pay his men he had to levy the usual Chowth from the ships trading on the Arabian Sea. The Marathas justly thought themselves masters of the Hindu seas and it was but natural that they should levy their chowth on the Hindu waters from the foreigners who sailed their seas with or without their permission. But the English and other European nations strongly resisted this claim, and Kanhoji had to punish them by taking their ships with all cargoes and men and hold them to ransom. When in 1715 Charles Boone was appointed Governor of Bombay, he decided to destroy Angre's strongholds. He strove much and bragged more. A powerful naval expedition was fitted out and soon attacked the Maratha sea port of Vijayadurga. The English breathed fury. The very names of their warships were meant to hurl defiance at the Marathas. One was named "Hunter;" another was "Hawk". The third was "Revenge;" the fourth was "Victory" before the contest began. This formidable fleet was backed up by a division of land forces, comprising

thousands of chosen English soldiers who meant to march against the fort by land. On the 17th of April 1717, the furious fleet began to bombard the fortress of Vijayadurga, but only to find that the Maratha fortifications were not made of wax. They and the garrison behind them stood bravely the heavy guns of the frigates, and the Maratha garrison kept all along jeering at the futile efforts of the English from the secure shelter of the walls. Enraged at this the English tried to escalade but the Marathas soon sent them back discomfited. All hope was lost and the English began to retreat. No sooner did the Marathas see this, than they opened such a heavy fire on them as to speed them back far more quickly than they had come on.

Next year Mr. Boone attacked Khanderi, but was as badly beaten back. Thereupon the Maratha menace to the English power in India grew daily to such an extent as to force the English king to fit out a special squadron of four men-of-war and entrust it to the command of a highly placed and distinguished officer, Commodore Matthew, of the Royal Navy. To render success doubly sure, the Portuguese too were invited, and they too readily agreed to march together against the Marathas. The Marathas received the united attack of these two powerful European nations in 1721 and fought so gallantly and skilfully, both by land and sea, as to make it impossible for the European forces to scale the walls of their fortresses.

Chafing with impotent rage, Commodore Mathew personally sallied forth in the heat of the action, only to fall a prey to the lance of a Maratha trooper who drove it in his thigh. The Commodore of the English forces was not to be cowed down by one lance wound ; he galloped after the trooper and fixed his two pistlos instead of one at him only to find that he had forgotton to load them. Nor did the allied forces prove more lucky than their Commodore. For, when they made their last and determined attack, reached the walls and tried to scale them, the Marathas opposed them with such skill and resolution as to send them shrieking back, while another Maratha squadron attacked the Portuguese flank by land. A panic seized the Portuguese, who fled for life and soon the English too followed them, leaving several of their guns and almost all of their ammunition in the hands of the victorious Marathas. When whatever little spirit of fighting was still left in the allied army was naturally spent in wordy war in charging each other with the responsibility of the two disgraceful defeats, the portuguese marched back to Chaul and the English sailed back to Bombay. For a long time the English Company had to convey their trading ships by armed vessels, lest the Maratha admirals might carry them off for that cursed Chowth. Soon the English "Victory" like its Commodore, found, after firing, that it had forgotten to load its pistol, and the English "Revenge" not only

failed to avenge, but got itself captured by the Marathas and held in ransom. In 1724 the Dutch too had their go. They attacked Vijayadurga with no less than seven warships, two bomb vessels and a body of regular troops : but they too failed to make any impression on the rocks of the Maratha fortitude, and the stout old Maratha admiral sailed the Hindu waters unchallenged—unchallangeable—and all this he and his nation had to achieve in spite of the constant wars with the Moslem Siddi by land in Konkan, the Nizam in the Deccan, the Moguls in Gujarat and Malwa and Bundelkhand.

Kanhoji Angre died about 1729. Just then another historical figure entered the political arena in Konkan, and soon began to exercise an influence over the minds of the leaders of the Maratha Confederacy, which, when all is said and sifted, was doubtless a powerful factor in keeping the great mission undimmed by lower passions in the minds of the Maratha people. It was Brahmendra Swami, the Guru of Shahu, of Bajirao, of Chimaji, of the Angres and of thousands of the rank and file. He was undoubtedly moved by great and noble patriotic emotion and principles and never failed to bring, out of confusion of details, the spiritual and moral aspect and hold the ideal of *Swadharma* and *Swarajpa* before the eyes of his people. The Swami had practised severe austeritties in his early life and developed wonderful yogic powers, as of going into samadhic trance for a

full month every year and living buried under ground during that period. He had travelled far and wide, like Ramadas, all over India and visited every great Indian shrine and had keenly felt the sting of Hindu enslavement and political dependence. A spark was still needed to blow the patriotic fire of his soul into a huge and steady conflagration. The Moslem rulers of Janjira supplied it. The Siddis were the determined foes of the Maratha kingdom and knew that they were soon to lose their illgotten possessions in Konkan, if the Maratha power grew daily as it did. Therefore, they always sided with the English, the Dutch, and the Portuguese against the Marathas and often raided the Maratha possessions. Not only this, but with the barbarity peculiar to Muhammadan zealots, used to kidnap hundreds of boys and girls, and convert them and others forcibly to Muhammadanism raze Hindu temples to the ground and commit numerous outrages on the Hindus. The shrine of Parashram, the beloved and sacred scene of the Swami's austerities and meditation, fell a victim to one of such outbursts of fanaticism. The Siddi pulled the temple down, stone by stone, plundered it of all its treasures and tortured such of the Brahmins as he could lay hand on. This outrage aroused such an inextinguishable pious wrath in the mind of Brahmendra Swami that it cured him of the vacuous and sickly sentimentality to which the Hindu sadhus get generally addicted and which makes them equally

disposed towards all, good or bad or indifferent. He determined to consecrate all his life to the furtherance of the War of Hindu Liberation and the cause of Hindu Independence. So great was the influence of the swami that the Siddi himself could not dare to turn him into an inveterate enemy and prayed that he should still live at Parasharam's shrine as before, without any further molestation. But the swami retorted : " You have wrought evil on the Gods and the Brahmins : just revenge may they wreak on you." Even Angre cold not appease him and make him stay in Konkan. "Never will I live, nor take a drop of water to drink in a land where the faithless foreigners rule. I will re-enter Konkan again—but at the head of avenging Hindu forces." Saying so, the swami went to Satara, and since then never ceased preaching a crusade against the faithless foes of the Hindus, and especially against the Siddis of Janjira and the Portuguese at Goa. His correspondence, which has now available to the general reader, shows how strenuously he kept feeding the sacred fire of Maratha resolution to free Hindudom, to fight in defence of Hindu Dharma and win back the political independence of the Hindus from Kashmere to the Cape.

Shahu and Baji Rao, both disciples of the swami, soon determined to avenge the crimes perpetrated by the Siddi and Maratha agents were busy plotting against and preparing the ground for a general campaign in Konkan against the Siddi as well as the Portuguese.

They had simultaneously to fight against the several powers from Delhi to Arcot, and so they had to watch and wait for a favourable opportunity. Just then civil feud drove one of the claimants to the throne of the Siddi to the Maratha camp for help. The Maratha Potnis quickly grasped his hand and wrote to Shahu that Maratha diplomacy had done its work. So excited was the king at this longed-for news that he wrote to Baji Rao with orders ; " Dont read this letter : mount your horse first and then read it :" The campaign opened in 1733 and the Maratha armies descending Sahyadri took the fort of Taka Ghosala and overran the territories of the Siddi, inflicting defeat after defeat on the Moslem forces. Soon Baji Rao attacked and re-took Raigad itself. This famous fortress was the seat of Shivaji's throne, the scene of his coronation, which, since the days of the war of independence, had still been in the Moslem hands. The news of the recovery of the capital of their great king caused univeral rejoicing throughout Maharashtra. Nor were the Maratha arms less successful on the sea. Manaji Angre inflicted a severe defeat on the Siddi's fleet near Janjira. The English too became alarmed and, first secretly and then openly, helped the Siddi with arms and ammunition and later on sent a substantial force under Captain Haldane to fight against the Marathas. But Khandiji Narhar, Kharde, Mode, Mohite and even ladies like Mathurabai Angre—that distinguished

woman whose correspondence with Brahmendra Swami reveals the depth of her patriotic eagerness to see the Hindu land freed from the hands of the foreigners and the pride with which she watched the Hindu flag rise triumphantly over towns and cities won back from the enemy—all continued the struggle, till at last in 1736 Chimaji Appa came on the scene and, in a battle near Rewas, won a splendid victory over the Abyssinian forces when their leader, the Arab enemy of the Hindus in the Konkan who had pulled down and levelled to the dust the temple of Parasharam, was beheaded and made to pay the price of his crime with his life. With him on that day fell fighting the Moslem commander of Underi and eleven thousand men on the Muhammadan side.

All Konkan, all Maharashtra showered their grateful blessings on their victorious champion who had so signally wreaked a just vengeance on the enemies of their Faith and vindicated the honour of the Hindu race. The king himself was overjoyed and wrote back: "The Sat-Siddi was a demon, no less terrible than Ravan. In killing him thou hast unrooted the Siddis. Thy fame spread everywhere." Summoning the young general to his court the king showered on him presents and robes of honour while Brahmendra Swami, who had been the prime mover of this campaign and kept the Marathas steady at their post wherever their efforts flagged through silly bickerings or mutual jealousy by rousing them to the

sense of their duty towards their Desh and their Dharma and by constantly emphasising the spiritual and moral aspect of the great War of Hindu Liberation they were engaged in, could hardly express his gratitude to God, or thank his illustrious disciple in lines adequate to convey the fulness of his feeling. At last he had succeeded in liberating the holy land of Parasharam, in defending the cause of Hindu Dharma.

" शामलाची क्षीतिकेली. कोकणांतधर्म—राखिला ! "

Thus the Siddi was subdued and this Moslem principality reduced to insignificance and subordination to the Hindu Empire. But this left the Portuguese to fight single-handed against the Marathas. Their easy conquests in India and the vast influence they weilded all over the western coasts from Khambayat to Ceylon had been steadily declining since the rise of the Maratha power. The religious tyranny and the inquisitional outrages they perpetrated in India were no less hideous than those of the Muhammadans and could only be equalled by Spanish record in Europe. When the Hindus who had groaned under this religious persecution and political servitude for over a century saw that their co-religionists and contrymen in Konkan who were under the Siddi had successfully shaken off the fetters and stood free, they naturally looked forth to the coming of the Maratha troops to liberate them too. A wave of great

expectation and patriotic favour passed over the Hindu mind and stiffened their resistance to the mad attempts of the Portuguese inquisition of Goa to crush Hindutva throughout the Portuguese Konkan. The successes of Baji Rao and the approach of the Maratha arms to their very borders only made the Portuguese madden through fear. With the folly that despair engenders the Portuguese began to suppress the Hindu movement and crush the new hopes and new spirit of resistance it infused, with an iron hand. The old records state : "They confiscated extensive estates of Hindu landlords. They surrounded and converted whole villages at the point of the bayonet. They carried away Hindu children, arrested and killed or enslaved those who refused to disown their Hindu Faith. The Brahmins were the chosen victims of their wrath. They made them prisoners in their houses. The public performance of all Hindu rites was prohibited, and if a Hindu dared to perform any rite his house was surrounded, the inmates arrested and sent to the Inquisition either to be forcibly converted to Christianity or sold as slaves or put to death." But in spite of all this reckless persecution the Hindu leaders persisted in resisting these monstrous orders of the Portuguese Government. Thousands fell victims to Portuguese wrath. At last the leaders of the Hindu populace—the Deshmukhs and Desais of Vasai (Bassein) and others places—opened secret negotiations with Baji Rao and Shahu, pressing them to strike

for their freedom and vindicate the honour of the Hindu freedom and Dharma and Desh. Antaji Raghunath, the Sardesi of Malad, brave, popular and a Hindu of Hindus, who had openly flouted the Portuguese order against Hindu rites and encouraged the people on his estate to defy it, fell a prey to the Portuguese persecutions, was arrested, had his land consfiscated and was sent to the fatal ordeal of the Inquisition at Goa. But fortunately for all Hindus, he effected his escape and managed to reach Poona in safety. He thereupon organised a secret scheme, promised help and local succour and guidance to Baji Rao as soon as the Marathas would enter the Portuguese possessions and assured Baji Rao that the whole Hindu populace of Portuguese Konkan looked up to him as an avatar sent to the earth to punish the faithless foes of Hinduism and longingly looked for his coming as for that of a divine deliverer.

In spite of great issues being fought out in the North, and his being hard pressed by the expenses of the extensive campaigns that the Marathas were carrying on all over India, Baji Rao was not a man to turn a deaf ear to such moving appeals of his down-trodden countrymen and co-religionists in the Konkan. With great speed, secrecy, and diligence Baji Rao collected a large force at Poona under the pretence of a more than usually elaborated festival in honour of the Goddess Parwati and, ordering out each his task, settled the outline of the coming campaign.

Chimaji Appa was appointed generalissimo. Ramchandra Joshi, Antaji and Ramchandra Raghunath and other captains and commanders were sent out to their different posts. In 1737 the Maratha troops attacked the fort of Thana which the Portuguese defended to the last, and had in the end to surrender. Delighted with the success the Marathas poured into Salsette. Shankaraji Keshav took the fort of Arnala, Joshi took Dharavi and Parsik. The Viceroy of Goa, deeply concerned at these disasters, sent a gallant warrior named Antonio to continue the struggle. New forces of fresh Portuguese soldiers were specially requisitioned from Europe. Thus reinforced, Antonio took a vigorous offensive and planned nothing less than the re-capture of Thana. Led by the gallant Pedro Mello, four thousand five hundred men marched out to attack and re-take Thana. But on the Maratha side in charge of Thana was no less a soldier than the redoubtable Malharrao Holkar. The attack and defence were worthy of heroic fame. But the Marathas, with the help of their artillery, mowed down the Portuguese so vigorously that their strength grew weaker. Seeing this the brave leader, Pedro Mello, began to rally his men when a well-aimed Maratha cannon ball struck him down to death. The Portuguese thereupon broke and fled back to their ships. Mahim, too, was regained by the Marathas after a heroic fight ; while Venkatrao Ghorpade advanced as far as Rakhol near Goa itself. The power of the Portuguese seemed doomed.

Just then came news of the invasion of Nadirshah. This was the greatest danger that India, or rather the only Hindu power represented by the Marathas, that was able to oppose the foreign hordes, had to face. This naturally gave a new lease of life to the Portuguese. Baji Rao with an eagle's eye took the whole sitution in view and wrote: "The war with the Portuguese is as naught. There is now only one enemy in Hindustan. The whole power of all India must get concentrated. I for one will spread our Marathas from the Narmada to the Chambal. Then let me see how Nadir dares to slip down towards the Deccan." He directed the Maratha representatives at the Courts of Delhi, Jaipore and other Northern States to organise, not a Maratha confederacy alone, but a great Hindu coalition of Rajputs, Bundelas, Marathas and others. The letter of the Maratha statesman of that period, now available in print, refer, clearly to a grand Hindu scheme that aimed to dethrone the Mogul emperor altogether and place the Maharana of Udaipore on the throne of all Hindustan.

But although the aspiring mind of the Maratha leader was revolving such vast schemes of Hindu conquests elsewhere, so great were the resources of Baji Rao that he could provide both an army to besiege Bassein and fight with the Portuguese and another large enough to drive Nadir Shah from Delhi. So the Portuguese soon found to their cost that

even Nadir Shah could not effectively slacken the Maratha grip that kept clutching at their throat. The Viceroy of Goa learnt of the fall of one after another, of the Portuguese strongholds dotted throughout their possessions. Sirigaon, Tarapore, Dahanu, were taken by the Marathas by storm and the garrisons put to the sword. Bassein was besieged by the Marathas. The heroic story of the valour of those who stormed and those who defended the fortress is so well known as to need no description in such a short review as this. The Marathas fought so sternly throughout this war that, to quote the evidence of an eye-witness "Even high officers fell fighting where they stood. Unable to bear the reproaches of Baji Rao, their beloved leader, they threw away their lives and fell fighting on the battlefield. The Portuguese, too, general after general, fell sword in hand. The Marathas attacked but were repulsed with heavy loss. They attacked again and again and were thrown back with terrible losses to both sides. The explosion of their own mines at times blew and tore off hundreds of their storming parties. But the revengeful and tenacious Marathas gave not in. They delivered no less than eighteen attacks. The Portuguese too repulsed them 18 times, but each time found themselves left more and more exhausted, and thus the siege went on from day to day. Nadir Shaha came and went back, but the siege continued and Bassein could not be taken. At last furious with

despair, Chimaji Appa roared out to his warriors, "Behold I must enter the fortress of Bassein. If you cannot carry it in my life to day, let your guns blow my head over the ramparts tomorrow, that I may enter it at least after death." Such indomitable valour could not fail to enthuse to stupendous efforts the men he led. Manaji Angre, Malharrao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde vied with each other in trying to scale the walls of the doomed fort. Just then, another Maratha mine blew off, levelling to the ground an important part of the Portuguese fortifications. The Marathas followed the explosion with indomitable courage and established themselves in the ruins. The Portuguese valour that had lionised itself on both the hemispheres could not shake the Marathas from the position they had taken up. The Portuguese could resist the Marathas no longer, as they kept enfilading and storming the garrison of their foes with such persistence and effect that the long expected end soon came. The Portuguese surrendered and the Maratha banner, triumphant over the tortures of the Hindu faith and the Hindu race, was carried and planted over Bassein, amidst the universal applause of all Maharashtra.

Almost all Konkan was now freed. The Portuguese power never recovered from this shock, though it managed to eke out a miserable existence at Goa, as the Marathas had ever their hands full of other important issues elsewhere. The Portuguese power

that once dominated the Asiatic waters from the Cape of Goodhope to the Yellow seas was broken up by the Marathas by land and by sea, never to raise its hand against the Hindu people.

One can very well understand the relief the Hindus felt, the sense of national elevation and strength and triumphant pride that filled their hearts at the sight of these great deeds of heroism of their warriors, before whom lay humbled those tyrants and oppressors of their land and faith, who for centuries past seemed as if born to rule over them and they destined to be ruled by them. For centuries the Hindus in Portuguese Konkan had not seen a Hindu banner aloft, unbent a Hindu sword that struck in defence of a Hindu cause and, instead of getting broken, broke the skull of the alien tyranny and insolence and avenged the wrongs done to their faith and their nation. Well may the correspondent of Brahmendra Swami write to him, when informing him of this brilliant success, "This valour, this tenacity, this triumph,—these deeds seem as if they belong to those times when gods visited our earth : Blessed are they who survive to see these triumphant days: and doubly blessed are they who fell *fighting to render this Triumph possible!*"

CHAPTER X

NADIRSHAH AND BAJI RAO

" बधूं नादिरशहा कसापुटे येतो तो ! "

Baji Rao.

BUT splendid as these successes in the Konkan were, the Maratha arms were prevailing elsewhere as splendidly. Baji Rao after the conquest and settlement of Gujarat, Malva and Bundelkhand and thus extending the power of the Hindu Empire up to the Chambal, was not likely to cry halt there for ever. His aim was a consolidated Hindu Empire that should embrace all Hindustan in its sweep. His anxiety was to see all the religious shrines of Hindus freed and cleansed from being polluted by the alien and faithless touch of the enemies of Hindu Dharma.

His mission did not therefore confine itself the sacred temple of Parashram in Konkan alone. Kashi, Gaya, Mathura were sill groaning under the sway of the Moslem insolence and fanaticism. So we find Baji Rao and other Maratha generals again and again trying to strike for the liberation of these holy cities with as restless an anxiety as they did in case of Pandharpur or Nasik. Nothing daunted by the tremendous odds against which the Marathas were fighting in Konkan by land and by sea, Baji Rao threatened the Moslem emperor with nothing less than an attack on Delhi itself if his demands—including the recovery of Kashi, Gaya, Mathura and

other religious places thereabout—were not conceded. The Moslem leaders at Delhi, wild with terror, strained their every nerve ; not less than 22 generals marched against the Hindu rebel ; and when they could show no real success against the Marathas, they resorted to imaginary ones to tickle their fancy and wrote exaggerated accounts to their emperor to the effect, that Baji Rao was utterly crushed in a great battle which was never fought and the Marathas were so completely routed that they could be seen nowhere in the North. The Emperor, thereupon, besides himself with glee, insolently dismissed the Maratha envoy and ordered festivities in honour of this great victory.

When informed of these proceedings at Delhi, Baji Rao, with a grim smile on his face, muttered "Well : I will take my Maratha forces to the very walls of Delhi and prove our existence in the North to the Moslem Emperor in the dismal light of the flames of his capital." He kept his word. With Santaji Jadhav, Tukoji Holkar, Shivaji and Yaswant Rao Powar, he was soon knocking at the gates of Delhi. The disillusioned emperor sent forces after forces of his own Imperial troops, but only to be beaten by the Marathas. Trembling now for his very life, the fool paid for his credulity that fancied the Marathas crushed. This was the first occasion when the tide of the Maratha valour knocked against and shook the gates of Delhi in open opposition. Un-

able to bear this progress of the Maratha arms in the North, the Nizam hastened with 34000 soldiers and the best artillery India could then boast of, and marched up to Sironj. The Rajputs too thought it fit to join him against the Marathas. But Baji Rao soon came treading on their heels, and with splendid generalship and valour speedily made the Nizam realise that he had once more fallen a prey in the hands of the evil Marathas. Their constant and dogged charges forced him to shut himself up behind the walls of Bhopal. He tried to sally forth, to rally round him his exhausted forces again and again, but he was so completely out-generalled and out-marched, and his forces, Moslem and Rajput, so thoroughly beaten, besieged and starved that the renowned Moslem general could not but sign a peace almost to Baji Rao's dictation.

But just then a great Muhammadan plot bore fruit, and Nadir Shah crossed the Indus. The Muhammadan hopes of revivifying their dying emperor rose high. The Nizam and many other Moslem chiefs, who were brought up in the traditions of Aurangzeb, very nearly fraternised with the invader, with the hope that he at least might do what the emasculated Mogul could not and weild a powerful sceptre and strike with might the rising Hindu power of the Maratha Confederacy and raise the Moslem Empire once more to its former pinnacle of glory and might. It all would have been so, but for the dauntless front and

resistance that the Hindus led by Baji Rao offered to the allied Moslem power led by that fierce foreigner.

Instead of being depressed or daunted, the soaring genius of Baji Rao rose to higher altitudes and aspirations at this great national crisis. In the coming of Nadir Shah he saw a unique opportunity of compressing centuries of Hindu history in years. His able envoys at the different courts in the North watched zealously and led the diplomatic circles as imperiously and effectively as their distinguished generals led his armies in the fields. Vyankojirao, Vishwasrao, Dadaji, Govind Narayan, Sadashiv Balaji, Baburang Malhar, Mahadeo Bhat Hingne and several others distinguished themselves and achieved as great diplomatic triumphs as the Powars, the Shindes, the Gujars, the Angres and another Maratha generals won military ones.

In fact it is these Maratha diplomats who preserved the unbroken traditions of the state policy and ideals of the great Hindu movement and prepared with admirable skill the ground for the successful operations of the Maratha generals. The letters and state despatches of these distinguished and talented statesmen have now become available in print, and their study cannot fail to impress the reader with the grandeur of the schemes and hopes and stupendous efforts which the Maratha diplomats, statesmen, soldiers and sailors conceived and put forth with the single and all-absorbing aim of establishing a con-

solidated Hindu Empire which would be the bulwark of the political independence of the Hindu race. It was to defeat this Hindu scheme that Nadir Shah was invited, and passively or actively assisted by those Muhammadan leaders who had been trained under Aurangzeb and could ill brook the rising power of the Hindus.

But Nadir Shah soon found that he was brought face to face, in 1739, with a Hindu power far different in nature from that which Muhammad Ghaznavi had to face in 1120-1124. In diplomacy, statesmanship, patriotic fervour, and above all, military strength and organisation—not only readiness to sacrifice but skill in sacrificing in such a way and only when it was found to rebound with tremendous force on their opponents and make the oppressors suffer more than the victim—in all these qualities the Hindus of Maharashtra had proved more that a match for the Muhammadans ever since they rose as a nation in the name of their land and their Faith and fought in the belief that they were doing so in the fulfilment of the will of Shri Ram and Shri Krishna. They feared no Nadir Shah: "Nadir Shah is no God: he cannot destroy the creation: he is bound to come to terms with those who prove strong enough. The talk of friendship can begin only after a trial of strengh. Peace can come only after war. So let the Maratha forces advance. If only the Rajputs and other Hindus, led by your Excellency (Baji Rao), present a bold front,

great things would be accomplished: Nadir Shah, aided by the Nizam, is not likely to go back, will directly march on the Hindu Kingdoms. So all these Hindu Rajas and Maharajas, including Savai Jaising, are anxiously waiting for your Excellency's (Baji Rao's) arrival. If but led by you our Marathas, the Hindus, can march straight on Delhi, and dethrone the Moslem, and seat the Maharana of Udaipore on the Imperial throne of Delhi."

In this strain wrote the Maratha envoys and diplomats to Baji Rao. Bassein was still holding on. Maratha armies were conducting great campaigns from the Karnatic to Katak and Allahabad. But Baji Rao did not hesitate a moment, or discourage in the least the high hopes his agents had raised in the minds of the Hindus in the North and the vast responsibilities they had undertaken. When some of his colleagues began to express diffidence, he exclaimed : "Oh, ye Heroes : why ye doubt and deliberate? Advance unitedly and the day of Hindu-pad-padshahi is at hand." "I will spread out my Marathas from the Narbada to the Chambal : then let me see how Nadir Shah dares to step forward towards the Deccan."

It is this stubborn attitude of the 'revengeful' Marathas that checked and chilled to death the anti-Hindu ambition of the Persian conqueror. Writing a long and ridiculous letter to Baji Rao whom he addressed as "a Devotee towards the Moslem Faith," commanding him to obey the Mogul Emperor at

Delhi and threatening how otherwise punishment would be meted out to the rebels, Nadir Shah beat a clever retreat. This scrap of paper that Nadir Shah wrote to the Marathas was relegated to a heap of rubbish and Shahu, the Maharaja of the Marathas, openly proclaimed in the Royal Assembly on the 14th June, 1739, that "Nadir Shah had fled the country through fear of the Marathas."

Nadir's precipitate retirement left the Nizam in the lurch. The Marathas marched forth towards Delhi to inflict a condign punishment on him for his participation in the anti-Hindu designs of Nadir Shah and hesitation to carry out the terms of the treaty he signed at Bhopal. But just then Baji Rao, the greatest general that ever led them, passed away on the 22nd April, 1740.

No man strove more honestly or more successfully for the furtherance of the great cause of Hindu Independence. When but a boy he drew his sword against the enemies of his race and religion and sheathed it not even to the honour of death. He died in the camp, in the very act of leading his forces against the enemies of the Hindu race. Throughout his long and arduous campaigns against the Siddis or the Rohillas or the Moguls or the Portuguese he knew no defeat. His premature death, due to super-human exertions he underwent for the speedy realisation of the great ideal of Hindu-pad-padashahi, was a greater blow to the Hindu cause than half a dozen invasions of Nadir Shah could ever have been.

CHAPTER XI

NANA AND BHAU

"दशरथ देशनि राज्यश्रांसि रामलक्ष्मणाचिया करीं"
"प्रभाततारा देशनि जाई कांति आपुली सूर्य करीं"
"तथीच बाजीरावें हिंदु स्वातंत्र्याची ध्वजा दिली"
"या नरवीरा नानांच्या या भाऊच्यादुदनिं करीं"

'महाराष्ट्रभाद्'

BAJI RAO died. But the spirit he had infused in his people could not die. It braced them up to sterner efforts and greater achievements under their new leader Balaji, alias Nana Saheb—the son of Baji Rao, and Bhau Saheb—the son of Chimaji, the victor of Bassein. Although he was only 19, Balaji had already seen service under his father and proved to be capable of the leadership of a great people. Shahu, ever ready to recognise merit, did not hesitate to appoint the brilliant youth in his father's place as the prime minister of the Maratha Empire. The ceremony of investiture was an imposing one. On the completion of it, a Royal letter of instructions was handed over by the Maharaja to the youthful minister, signifying in a few inspiring sentences the very heart of the great idea that had ever been struggling itself to actualise in the mighty movements of Maharashtra. "Your father Baji Rao," wrote the King, "had served most faithfully and achieved mighty

deeds. He aimed to extend the bounds of Hindu rule to the farthest limits of Hindustan. You are his son: realise your father's ideal, achieve what he aspired to, and lead your horsemen beyond the walls of Attock!"

Faithful to the Royal command, Nana and Bhau strove even unto death to crown with triumph the work which Shivaji had begun. Nor did they require any exhortation to do that. Hindu-pad-padashahi was the vision of their childhood, the ambition of their youth. To strive and fight and die for it was a labour of love to them. They hated even the cringing sense of fidelity and slavish regard which Shahu at times experienced in spite of himself towards the Mogul Court at Delhi, where he had passed his days of captivity, enlivened by occasional royal smiles.

Immediately after the ceremony of investiture was over, Shahu ordered Balaji to go to Poona and sent Raghoji Bhosale on an expedition to the south.

Taking advantage of the civil war that broke out amongst the Marathas after the return of Shahu, the Muhammadans, led by an able general Sadat Ulla, had brought back the whole of the south-east of the peninsula under the Moslem sovereignty and pressed hard the little Maratha colony at Tanjore. Pratap Sing, the Raja of Tanjore, naturally turned towards Shahu for assistance. Sadat Ulla died in 1732 A. D. and his nephew Dost Alli succeeded him as the Nabob of Arcot. He was a powerful chief and a sworn enemy of the

Maratha power. Early on the 19th May, 1740, the Marathas pressed through a gorge to the south of Dost Alli's position, and attacked his front and flank and rear. In a few hours the Moslem army was totally destroyed and Dost Alli lay dead in the field. The Hindus, long groaning under the Moslem tyranny, rejoiced at the triumph of their co-religionists and made common cause with the Marathas. Raghoji, levying heavy contributions of war as he went from cities and towns, moved against Arcot. Sufdar Alli and Chandasaheb, the son and son-in-law of Dost Alli, were holding out at Vellore and Trichinopoly with powerful forces under them. Raghoji thereupon gave it out that, as the campaign had been a great pecuniary loss, he meant to abandon it. He actually fell back some 80 miles from Trichinopoly. Evan a man of Chandasaheb's activity and tact was so completely taken in by this device that he drafted away some 10000 men of his forces to attack Madura, the richest city of Hindu pilgrimage. But the Hindu leader, seeing the Moslem so well caught in his trap, suddenly wheeled round and with forced marches appeared before Trichinopoly. Barasaheb, who had been despatched to wreak vengeance on Madura and sack the Hindu sacred city, tried to hurry back to reinforce his brother; but Raghoji, detaching a part of his forces to interrupt him, engaged him in a gory fight and knocked him down dead from his elephant. The Muhammadans were totally routed and the dead body

of their chief was carried to Raghoji's tent. The Maratha leader had it clad in rich clothes and sent it to Chandasaheb, his brother. The siege of Trichinopoly continued for months. But the Moslem leader, in spite of his brave defence, could not but surrender to the hated Hindu. Raghoji took Chandasaheb a prisoner and sent him to Satara, and appointed Murar Rao Ghopade to hold Trichinopoly with a garrison of 14000 soldiers. Sufdar Alli too had already surrendered to the Marathas who promised to recognise him as the Nabob of Arcot on condition that he paid 10 millions of rupees and—be it noted—reinstated all the Hindu princes whom his father had dispossessed since 1736 A. D.

But while Raghoji was winning these splendid successes in the south, his Government had already come in conflict with Alivardi Khan, the Moslem ruler of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Mir Habib, the leader of the party that was opposed to Alivardi Khan, invited the Marathas to assist him. Bhaskerpant Kolhatker, the Dewan of Raghoji, eager to catch the first opportunity to humble the Moslem power in Bengal and extend the Hindu sway to the eastern limits of Hindustan, accepted the invitation, and the Maratha horse, some ten thousand strong, rushed marching through Behar, stamping underneath its hoof the prestige of the Muhammadan power there. As soon as Alivardi Khan, who was by no means a despicable leader, came upon them, the Marathas cleverly caught him in a fix,

cut off his supplies, crushed his forces and forced him to fall back on Katwa. Mir Habib pressed Bhaskerpant to change his mind and remain in Bengal throughout the rainy season, and live by levying contributions of war on the enemy's territory. The Marathas thereupon attacked Murshidabad, took Hoogly, Midnapur, Rajmahal and almost all the Bengal districts west of the Ganges except Murshidabad. They intended to celebrate the Kali festival there with unwonted pomp for having favoured the Hindu cause and humbled the pride of the non-Hindu bigots in Bengal. Although just then Alivardi Khan suddenly crossed the Hoogly and took the Marathas by surprise and chased them to the frontiers of Bengal, yet it was destined to be merely for a while. For Raghoji soon returned. Balaji too, at the head of another Maratha army, entered Behar, ostensibly as an Imperial General, but in fact to levy revenue there for himself and to settle his own account with Raghoji Bhosale. As soon as the Maratha generals reached an understanding between themselves, Balaji withdrew and Bhaskerpant demanded a large sum of indemnity and the inevitable Maratha Chowth. Unable to meet him in the field, Alivardi Khan decided to resort to a treacherous plan and, inviting Bhaskerpant to discuss the question of indemnity to his tent as a guest and an envoy, caused assassins to attack and murder him as soon as, at the given signal, the cry of "Kill the Kafirs" was raised.

No less than 20 Maratha officers fell there on that ghastly day. Only Raghoji Gaikwad survived and led the surprised and confused Maratha forces through a hostile country and in the race of the repeated efforts of the exhilarated foe to hem them in and cut them to pieces.

But a murder here or a surprise there was not likely to roll back the tide of the Maratha movement, which the imperial resources of an Aurangzeb failed to repress. Yet Alivardi Khan was stupid enough to write this ridiculous letter to Raghoji : " Praised be the Lord ! The horses of the faithful feel no dread of encountering the infidels. When the lions of Islam shall so engage the monsters of idolatry.............. that one part beg for quarters, then alone peace would be possible." Raghoji retorted that, while he had advanced a thousand miles to meet Alivardi, that lion of Islam dared not move even a hundred to meet him: and refusing to carry a war of foolish words any longer, ordered the Maratha light horse to invade and levy revenue throughout Burdwan and Orissa. Year in and year out, the Marathas continued to harass Alivardi Khan, levy regular revenue where they could, impose and collect heavy war contributions where they could not : overran districts, marched in and out, fought or fled as suited them best, till they made it impossible for the Moslem ruler to conduct the Government in all the three provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Defeat could not deter them, nor disasters depress—they must have their Chowth.

At last in 1750 A. D. Alivardi Khan—"that lion of Islam"—had enough of the 'infidels' and conceived such a 'dread of encountering' them that he begged for quarters and ceded Orissa for the 'mund-katai' or the blood-fee for the dastardly murder of Bhaskerpant, and engaged to pay 10 lakhs of rupees a year for the Chowth of Bengal and Behar. Thus it was "the heroes of Faith" who at last begged for quarters "at the hand of the monsters of idolatry:" one wonders if they 'praised the Alla' for it on that day.

While Raghoji Bhosale was thus successfully striving to root out the Muhammadan power from Bengal, other Maratha generals were distinguishing themselves as brilliantly in battering the strongholds of the Moslem power in the North. The fanatical Rohillas and Pathans, who held in their grip all the territory from the Jumna to the borders of Nepal, formed a combination so terrible as to force the Vazir of the Mogul Emperor at Delhi to seek the aid of the Marathas in his attempt to defeat the ambitious intentions of the Pathans to re-establish an Afghan monarch in India on the ruins of the Mogul empire. The Marathas, who had taken such pains to bring about that ruin, naturally hated any attempt or ambition on the part of any Moslem or non-Hindu people to despoil them of their gain. So the Marathas gladly responded to the invitation of the Vazir and their leaders, Malharrao Holkar and Jayajirao Shinde, crossed the Jumna and marched against the position

the Pathans were holding at Kadarganj. The Pathans held out doggedly, but the Marathas ultimately won a a splendid victory and routed their forces. Not only that, but they immediately marched out and hemmed in Ahmed Khan, the great leader of the Pathans, who was hastening to help his comrades at Kadarganj. Ahmed Khan entered Farukabad, and the Marathas invested it. For weeks the dogged fight continued. But the Pathans could not be crushed, owing to the succour they kept receiving from the other side of the Ganges at the hands of the powerful army of the Rohillas. The Marathas managed to build a bridge of boats, crossed the Ganges in time, and while a part of them was pressing the siege of Farukabad as strenuously as ever, the main part of their forces attacked the combined power of Rohillas and Pathans 30000 strong and utterly defeated them in a fierce fight. Ahmed Khan at Farukabad attempted an escape and tried to engage the diminished forces of the Marathas there, but failed and was hotly pursued. The Marathas routed the Moslems, looted their camp and carried away an enormous booty—elephants and horses, camels and banners and baggage.

The moral result of the campaign, too, was as great as the military glory was brilliant. For the Pathans, just to spite the Marathas and give a religious colouring to their cause, had attacked Kashi and committed outrages on the Hindu temples and priests, swaggering loudly that the Kafirs could never face the Pathans.

For Allah was on their side ; and in a way that came out true. For the Marathas, too, found it very difficult to face them for the simple reason that the Pathans in every pitched fight turned their backs to the Marathas, no sooner had they faced them. The crushing defeats, the hot and persistent pursuit of the Moslem, made the Hindus feel that the wanton insults to their temples and hearths had been amply avenged. The letters of that period are all penned in this triumphant tone. "The Pathans had insulted Kashi and Prayagji. Well, Haribhaktas have triumphed at last......The foes had sown the wind at Kashi ; well, God had made them reap the whirlwind at Farukabad." Nor were the political results less brilliant. The Moslem Emperor, thoroughly cowed down, conferred on the Marathas the right to levy the Chowth—which was only the thin end of the wedge—in the remaining parts of the Indian Empire. Thus, Multan (Sind), the Punjab, Rajputana and Rohilkhand were brought under Maratha influence and the "Haribhaktas" could rightly claim to have driven the Maratha lance into the very heart of the Mogul empire. On receiving news of these momentous events, Balaji, the leader of the Maratha confederacy, wrote back to the armies : "Superb is the courage ! indomitable the bravery ! the armies of the Deccan, crossing the Narbada, the Jumna and the Ganges, have challenged and fought and destroyed the armies of such precious foes as the Rohillas and

Pathans! Officers and men! you have achieved a triumph that is truly uncommon. You are the pillars of this Hindu Empire. Your name, as the maker of Kings, has penetrated to Iran and Turan farther" [1751 A. D.]

Once again the leaders of the Maratha Confederacy attempted to recover Kashi and Prayag from the Nabob of Oudh and the Vazir of Delhi. As representatives of the great movement of Hindu liberation, they keenly felt the humiliation that the Moslems should still hold the foremost religious places of the Hindus. Again and again we find the Marathas restless over it all, as the correspondence of that period clearly shows. Impatient of arriving at diplomatic results, Malharrao once went so far as to decide to effect a raid and march right towards Kashiji, pull down the mosque that stood over the holy site of Dyana-wapi and thus wipe off the standing insult to the Hindu people and their faith. For, the mosque ever reminded the Hindus of those dark days when the Moslem crescent rose insultingly on the ruins of the foremost temples of the Hindu Faith. But the Brahmins of Kashi, afraid of the vengeance that the Yavanas, still so dominant round about Kashi, would wreak on themselves and their city, prayed that "the proposed raid be abandoned till a better chance presented itself." No wonder that these Brahmins of Kashi expressed in that very letter a pious anxiety as to the sin that would accrue to them for this piece of advice that dissuaded Malharrao

from avenging a national insult merely for the safety of their lives and their city (18th June 1751).

Shahu died in 1749. Since then Balaji, who had been invested with the supreme power by Shahu himself, became the head of the Maratha Confederacy and the soul of their national ambition and ideals. In spite of civil strifes and petty palace intrigues that at times rose to serious dimensions, this able man strove far more consciously and determinedly than several of his predecessors to rear up a great and independent Hindu Empire, under the leadership of the Marathas, on the ruins of the Mogul Empire, and conducted a gigantic struggle with all the foreign rivals in the field, Moslem or Christian, Asiatic or European.

Among these the French were already accumulating great influence and power in the lower Deccan. Balaji was not unmindful of them. But, as he had simultaneously to conduct great campaigns in distant parts in India and face the numerous enemies who from all sides strove to crush the one great Hindu power of Maharashtra, Balaji could not for a long time take the French by themselves, and settle accounts with them. But ultimately by a series of clever manoeuvres of diplomacy and the irresistible pressure brought to bear on them in the battle field, Balaji succeeded in baffling the French so completely as to force them and their protege, the Nizam, to sign a treaty at Bhalaki in 1752 A. D. by which the Marathas gained all the territories between the Tapti and the Godavari, and

greatly undermined the French influence in the various courts in the Deccan.

The Peshwa had already undertaken to punish all the rebellious Nabobs in the Karnatic and lower Deccan, inflicted a serious defeat on the Nabob of Savnur and forced him to hand over an extensive territory to the Marathas and to pay 11 lakhs of rupees as tribute for what he still held. Then the Marathas, 60000 strong and led by Balaji and Bhau, appeared before Shirangapattan, exacted 35 lakhs of rupees for the accumulated Chowth, retook Shivre and punished minor Muhammadan chiefs. Then Balvantrao Mehendale marched against the Moslem Nabob of Cuddapah. All the Moslem chiefs in the lower Deccan, who kept trembling at the mention of the Marathas, rallied round the Nabob. Even the English sided with him. But in spite of the rains, Balvantrao Mehendale attacked the Moslem forces and, in a pitched and fierce battle, put to the sword thousands of Pathans and killed the Nabob himself. Annexing half of his dominions to their kingdom, the Marathas proceeded against the Nabob of Arcot who was strongly backed by the English. But neither he nor his patrons could afford to flout the Maratha demands—had to pay 4 lakhs to pacify them. In 1759 the Marathas besieged Bangalore, took Cheenapattan and forced Haidar, who was just then trying to make himself master of Mysore, to pay the stipulated sum of 34 lakhs of rupees. Balaji had a mind to crush him then, but the great campaigns

that the Marathas were carrying on elsewhere in India constantly forced him to recall his troops from the lower Deccan and leave the work there half done.

Meanwhile, in 1753, Raghoba took Ahmedabad and extracted 30 lakhs of rupees from the Jats for opposing the influence of the Marathas at Delhi. Just then there arose a civil war amongst the Rajputs about the claim to the Gaddi of Jodhpur. Ramsing courted the assistance of the Marathas against the other claimant, Bijaysing. The Marathas consented, and Dattaji and Jayappa Shinde personally led the expedition. After a bloody fight with the Rajputs, some 50000 strong, the Marathas inflicted a severe defeat on Bijaysing, who thereupon fled to Nagore. Jayappa invested it, but soon found that it was unpleasant work. Rajputs fighting with Marathas, Hindus with Hindus, Balaji again and again pressed Shinde to effect a compromise in Rajputana and proceed to undertake the task, so dear to every Maratha heart, ot liberating the holy cities of Hindustan, Kashi and Prayag.

But, just then, Bijaysing resorted to a crime which sent such a thrill of horror throughout Maharashtra as to make any effort at compromise impossible. It would be remembered that the uncle of Bijaysing had formerly got Pillaji Gaikwad assassinated, while a guest at his camp. Bijaysing, too, determined to follow in the footsteps of his uncle, in spite of the knowledge that Pillaji's murder had only sharp-

ened the edge of Maratha revenge and been dearly paid for. Three Rajput assassins started from Bijaysing's camp, disguised as beggars, kept picking up grams dropped on the floor of the Maratha stable in front of Jayappa's tent, and, as soon as he came out for bathing and covered his face with a rubbing towel, pounced upon him and thrust their daggers in his sides. Jayappa fell mortally wounded. Two assassins were caught and one escaped. Immediately the Rajputs came out, attacked the forces, intending to crush them while leaderless and confused. It would have been so, but for the undaunted spirit of the great warrior who lay there foully done to death. Jayappa, with his dying breath, exhorted his mourning comrades to sally forth and face the fighting foes first and then to weep like women over his wounds. Fired with these words of their dying chief, the Marathas rushed forth and Bijaysing was once more beaten. Other Maratha generals too hurried to Shinde's help. Antaji Mankeshwar, with 10000 soldiers, entered Rajputana and inflicted condign punishment on all those Rajput states which supported Bijaysing. Thus utterly helpless, Bijaysing sued for peace, acknowledged the claims of Ramsing, whom he had dispossesed, to Nagore, Madata, and other districts, and gave Ajmere and paid all the expenses of the campaign to the Marathas.

Just then the widowed mother of the infant king of Bundi sought Shinde's assistance against her scheming

rivals. Dattaji Shinde did the work to the satisfaction of the Rajput queen who thereupon paid 75 lakhs of rupees to him as his reward.

CHAPTER XII

ON TO THE INDUS

" फेडून नवस माहोरास गेले लाहोरास जिंकीत शेंडे ॥
अरेऱ्यांनि अटकेतं पाव घटकेत लाविले झेंडे ॥
सरदार पदरचे कसे कुणि सिंह जसे कुणि शार्दूल गेंडे " ॥

'Prabhakar'

MEANWHILE Raghoba was dominating and shaping great events at Delhi. He helped Gaziuddin to assume the office of the Imperial Vazir. He forced the emperor to cede Gaya and Kurukshetra to the Marathas. He personally advanced and occupied Mathura, Brindawan, Gadmukteshwar, Pushpavati, Pushkar and several other religious places of the Hindus : the sacred city of Benares, too, was entered and occupied and held by a strong Maratha detachment. Thus one of the most cherished dreams of the Hindu people was at last realised, and Raghoba could proudly report to the Peshwa of having liberated and recovered almost all the holy sites and cities of Hindudom from the Moslem hands. The Hindu colours waving triumphantly over those sites and cities in the North, that were so endeared to every Hindu heart by a thousand holy assosiations, supplied

yet another moral justification of the claim of the Marathas to represent and lead the great movement of Hindu liberation and Hindu-pad-padashahi. The emperor too thought that he had had enough of the Marathas and showed fight. As soon as the new Vazir Gaziuddin became cognisant of the emperor's secret design against himself and the Marathas who had raised him to the office, he invited Holkar with 50000 soldiers, who easily routed the imperial forces so thoroughly that the very ladies of the harem were left unprotected and fell in the hands of the Marathas. They, with Gaziuddin, entered Delhi, forced their way into the palace, dethroned the old emperor and seated a new one on his throne and, as if to render the vengeance of Nemesis poetically complete, named him Alamgir II.

Alamgir—the conqueror of the world : Alamgir I and Alamgir II. Aurangzeb (Alamgir I) fancied that he could blow out the lamp of Hindu life that flickering burnt in the temple just with a breath of his imperial wrath. He swore by Allah and blew : but, to his utter dismay, discovered that the faintly flickering lamp scorching his beard burst suddenly into a wildfire : the hills of Sahyadri caught it and, setting aflame a millon hearts and towers and turrets, and hills and valleys, by land and sea, it grew into a great sacrificial conflagration. Alamgir I despised the Marathas as " mountain rats." Since then the Hindu rats developed such terribly sharp and powerful claws

that many a lion of Islam lay torn and bleeding at their feet in the capital of Alamgir II. Emperor Alamgir I did not consdescend to recognise Shivaji even as a mere Raja : but his descendant, Alamgir II, could call himself Emperor only because the descendant of Shivaji did not mind it much to allow him the luxury of the name.

The Indian Muhammadan world was thoroughly alarmed, and kept chafing with impotent rage at the extension of the Hindu power and influence. Rohillas and Pathans so badly beaten at Farukabad and elsewhere, the displaced Vazir and Nabobs and the Moulvis and the Maulanas who could ill bear the triumph of the Kafirs and the sight of the daily diminishing splendour at their ever waning crescent, the emperor himself who could not feel it very comfortable in keeping up his position poised on the point of the Maratha lance, the dispossessed, the hopeless and the ambitious—all Moslem interests vowed vengeance against the Marathas, and began to revolve dark schemes of driving and destroying them altogether. Strange to say—and yet not so strange—the extension of the Maratha power in the North gave rise to a deadly antipathy even in the hearts of some of the Hindu princes. Madhavsing of Jaipur, Bijaysing of Jodhpur, the Jats and some other minor Hindu chiefs did not hesitate to ally themselves with their natural and national enemies against the Marathas, and encouraged the

disaffected Moslem elements to hatch up some great plot to get rid of the only Hindu power that could cope with all who aimed at the destruction of the Hindu faith and Hindu independence. The leader of the Moslem world instinctively fell back on the old traditional scheme of inviting their co-religionists from beyond the Indian Frontier against the hated nation of idolators and Kafirs, who, none of them, could face in a fair fight, nor dupe, nor outwit in any Machiavelian move or Aurangzebian treacherousness.

This extensive plot found fit leaders in Nazibkhan, who was a Rohilla chief and had everything to gain from the downfall of the Marathas, and in Malakazamani, who had ever been the most intriguing figure in the imperial harem and could not bear that she had to beg her bread at the hands of the hated Hindus. They decided to initiate the tactics of their predecessors who, under similar hopes and fears, had invited Nadir Shah. They established secret communications with Ahmedshah Abdally and sent him pressing requests to invade India and save the Muhammadan empire from the attacks of the unbelievers. Ahmedshah, too, had his own reason for accepting this invitation. The guilty lust of conquest had ever been his passion. But, above all, the telling fact, that the sphere of Maratha influence and power had already touched his frontiers near Multan and daily threatened to widen yet further, had already made it incumbent on him to fight the Marathas out.

He had alredy annexed Multan and the Punjab to his dominions. But in 1750 the Marathas had undertaken to preserve order in and defend the provinces of Thatta, Multan and the Punjab against any internal and foreign aggression and had secured the right of levying their chowth in them. Accordingly they had helped Gaziuddin, the Vazir of their own choice, to recover the Punjab and Multan from the hands of Abdally in 1754 A.D. This was a direct challenge thrown out to Abdally. Just then the intrigues which Nazibkhan conducted assured Abdally of the support of a widely spread and powerful Muhammadan section in India. This whetted the ambition of the Pathan conqueror to such an extent that he began to dream of winning the imperial crown of India for himself and to achieve what Nadir Shah had failed to achieve. Learning that the chief leaders of the Marathas were preoccupied in the Deccan about 1756, he crossed the Indus with 80000 men, occupied the Punjab, took Delhi almost unopposed and assumed the imperial titles. True to the traditions of a Pathan conqueror, he even got angry and celebrated this assumption of the imperial dignity by ordering a ghastly general massacre of the citizens of Delhi for a few hours. In those few hours, not less than 18 thousand persons were put to the sword in cold blood. Thence he started to vindicate his title as the defender of the Moslem Faith by devastating the sacred places and the holy cities of the

Hindus, which the Marathas had but recently recovered from the Muhammadan grip. Mathura was the first victim to fall. But it fell as does a martyr. Some 5000 Jats gave a heroic fight to the overwhelming forces of the enemy, as long as they lived. After wreaking his vengeance on Mathura, if only to spite the Marathas, the Moslem conqueror came to Gokul Brindavan, only to find a deathless resistance offered to him by some 4000 armed Nagas who had assembled there to fight or die in defence of their Gokul-Nath. Some two thousand Bairagees fell on the field, but succeeded in repulsing the foes and saving the temple of their faith. For Abdally soon marched towards Agra, took the city and attacked the fort there. Gaziuddin, the Vazir, who led that Moslem section in the North which hated the Pathans and opposed the establishment of a Pathan or Persian dynasty in India as fiercely as the Marathas did, had taken refuge in that fort and was hourly expecting the news of the Marathas hastening to his rescue.

But what were the Rajputs of Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur and several other Hindu princes and chiefs doing there? They hated the Marathas much and questioned their claim to lead the movement of Hindu-pad-padashahi. Well then, this was surely the time for them to prove that they were better fitted to lead it than the Marathas were by defending the Hindu interests in the North and by striking either

singly or unitedly, in defence of the Hindu Faith and the Hindu-pad-padashahi. But not a man stirred. Ahmedshah Abdally simply walked down over the plains, teeming with millions of Hindus, to Delhi, to Agra, and would have done so, as he loudly proclaimed to do, right down to the Deccan. The Moslem hordes poured down unresisted and under the very eyes of the Rajputs and Jats and several other Hindu princes and chiefs, loudly calling for vengeance on the Kafirs,—trampled over the Hindu hearths and homes, temples and tirthas. But no one could raise a finger against them, till the Marathas came.

The news of Abdally's invasion did no more damp or depress the Maratha leaders in Poona than the news of Nadir Shah's advance had done. A powerful army led by Raghunath Rao was forthwith despatched to the North. Abdally received the news near Agra. He was a clever and experienced general and had seen some reverses in his life. He immediately saw the danger of advancing further in the teeth of such opposition offered by such a foe, and like his master, Nadir Shah, decided not to risk what was already gained by courting a probable defeat. So he immediately fell back, reached Delhi, married the daughter of Malkazamani to strengthen his claim to the Mogul crown, left a garrison of 10000 soldiers to guard Sarhind and, appointing his son Taimur Shah as the Viceroy of Lahore, hurried back to his country as suddenly as he had come down.

The Marathas, in spite of their preoccupation in the Deccan, advanced as rapidly as they could, undoing all that Abdally had done. Sakharam Bhagwant, Gangadhar Yeshwant and other Maratha generals entered the Doab and put down the Rohillas and Pathans who had meanwhile revolted against them. The Vazir, Gaziuddin, was rescued. Vithal Shivdeo marched on Delhi and, after a strenuous fight for a fortnight or so, took the capital, and captured alive Nazibkhan, the arch enemy of the Marathas and the chief instigator of the Pathan plot. Thence the Marathas advanced to meet the forces of Abdally, some 10000 strong, stationed at Sarhind, under Abdul Samad, and, routing them, took their general captive. Now they determined to press on towards Lahore. The rapid successes of the Marathas had so alarmed Taimur Shah, the son and Viceroy of Abdally, who held the Punjab and Multan for him, that he dared not face them in the field. So he withdrew, and Raghunathrao entered Lahore in triumph. Jahankhan and Taimur attempted to effect a clever and well-ordered retreat. But the Marathas soon came, chasing them so hotly that the retreat soon became a rout. Abandoning all that was less valuable than life, the forces and the son and viceroy of him who had come to crush the Marathas and conquer an Indian Empire, could only seek their safety in an ignominious flight before the Marathas. Their camp was looted, an immense booty in money and material

was taken, and the Geruwa banner, that Ramdas handed over to Shivaji, was at last planted on the very northern frontiers of Hindustan.

The Hindus reached Attock. For the first time since the dismal day when Prithviraj fell, a triumphant Hindu flag waved proudly on the sacred river of the Vedas. The Hindu horse of victory drank the waters of the Indus, gazing fearlessly at himself as reflected in its crystal tides.

As the news of these splendid achievements of their forces reached Maharashtra, it simply electrified the nation. Antaji Mankeshwar wrote to Raghunath Rao : "Lahore is taken : the foe driven out and chased beyond the frontiers : our forces reached the Indus : glad news indeed ! It had cowed down all the disaffected elements in the north, Rajas and Raos, Subhadars and Nabobs. Only the Marathas could avenge the wrongs done to our nation. They alone have wreaked the vengeance of all Hindustan on Abdally. Words fail to convey the fulness of my feelings. Heroic deeds have been done, no less heroic than those of the avatars !"

It is no wonder that the Marathas were thus surprised at their own achievements. From Dwarka to Jagannath, from Rameshwar to Multan, their sword had triumphed, their word was law. They openly proclaimed themselves as the defenders and successors of the Indian Empire, and vindicated their claims against all those who came to contest it from

Iran, Turan, or Afghanistan, from England, France or Portugal. Shivaji's mission of Hindu-pad-padashahi was almost realised. The teachings of Ramdas had been translated into deeds. They had carried the Hindu colours in triumph to the very banks of the Indus and, as Shahu has commanded Baji Rao to do, were likely to carry them yet further.

For the occupation of Attock suddenly widened the sphere of their influence and the horizon of their political activities. It could no longer confine itself within the four walls of Delhi. Agents and emissaries and ambassadors poured in the Maratha camp, from Kashmere, Kandahar and Kabul. A time was when the dispossessed Hindu elements to a gaddi invited help from the Moslems of Kabul and Persia. Now the tables were turned. Petitions and prayers were daily received by Raghunath Rao from the disaffected elements of Kabul and Kandahar. Writes the general to Nana Saheb on the 4th May 1758. "The forces of Sultan Taimur and Jahankhan were routed and their very camp, with all their belongings, fell in our hands. Only a few could recross Attock alive. The Shah of Iran has defeated Abdally and has personally written to me pressing me to advance further on to Kandahar and proposes that, when Abdally is thus crushed between our allied forces, he would recognise Attock as the frontier of our empire. But I do not know why we should confine ourselves to Attock. The two provinces of Kabul and

Kandahar belong to our Hindustani empire ever since the days of Akbar to Aurangzeb. Why then should we hand them over to the foreigners? I think that the king of Iran would be glad to confine himself to Iran and refrain fron contesting our claim to Kabul and Kandahar. But whether he likes it or not, I have decided to treat them as a part of our empire and exercise our sway over them. Already the nephew of Abdally, who claims his position, has approached us, pressingly requesting help from us against Abdally. I mean to appoint him as our Governor of those parts of our empire that lie beyond the Indus and despatch some forces to back him up. For the time being, I must hasten back to the Deccan. My successors will see that these extensive designs bear fruit and our regular administration is introduced in the provinces of Kabul and Kandahar."

CHAPTER XIII

HINDU-PAD-PADASHAHI

"इराण पासुनि फिरंगाणपर्यंत शत्रुची उठ फली"
"सिंधुपासुनी सेतुबंधपर्यंत रणांगण भू आली"
"तीन स्वंहिच्या पुढांची ती परंतु सेना बुडविली"
"सिंधु पासुनी सेतुबंधपर्यंत समरभू लढापिली"

SOON after penning the letter, Raghunath Rao hastened back with his forces to the Deccan as the

rainy season was imminent. It was, however, unfortunate that he had to do so and leave the newly conquered provinces but weakly garrisoned. A yet more fatal factor that was not satisfactorily dealt with was that Nazibkhan, the most intriguing leader of the Pathani plot, was yet spared even after he was captured by the Marathas and in spite of the desire of almost all the Marathas to make him pay with his life for his treacherous dealings with Ahmedsha Abdally, in instigating him against the Maratha power. But that wily chief was a consummate actor. He offered numberless apologies, adopted Malharrao as his father and begged him to spare his penitent life as he would that of his son. Malharrao was ever anxious to adopt as his son all those who forfeited their lives as the enemies of the Maratha cause, and pleaded so pressingly for Nazib, that Raghunath Rao had to give in against his will. It will soon be seen how Nazib spent his penitent life in fomenting most dangerous intrigues against those who had so foolishly spared it.

Up to this time,the Marathas,for diplomatic reasons, were more or less acting in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. That was the line of least resistance and it paid them well. The position they occupied then was analogous to that which the English held in India before the fall of the Marathas in 1818. The same political and diplomatic reasons, which forced the English to pretend to be merely the Agents of the Emperor down to 1857, even when they were the

de facto emperor themselves, made the Marathas not hurry the process much, which could only be done by raising a storm of opposition, not only from Indian Moslems but from the English, the French, the Pathans and even the Hindu princes themselves. For each of these had an eye to the dying empire's crown and inheritance, but each one willed that it should linger on its death-bed till the rest of the claimants disappeared and it fell an easy prey to him alone.

But the great successes in the north, coupled with those which the Peshwa had himself won in the south, raised the Maratha power to such a position that, from Balaji and Sadashivarao Bhau to the very man in the street, the whole nation felt itself strong enough to give the finishing stroke to the great work they had undertaken. Grand schemes came up for discussion before the Maratha Councils. They felt their strength. They knew they had dealt a death-blow to the Moslem Empire in India. They knew that they had grown into an Asiatic power and that Poona had begun to be the centre, not merely of Indian, but of Asiatic politics. The Mogul Empire lay smashed at their feet: now they decided to sweep off all that still impeded them in taking the last and crowning step of openly assuming the imperial crown. Sadashivrao Bhau, more than any other leader in the Maratha camp, felt himself the chosen instrument of this great cause and was determined to render it possible or die fighting for

it. They had brought about the downfall of the Moslem Empire: the Hindus had conquered the conqueror: and, fired at the eloquence of Bhau, they decided to strive in such a wise as to "free" all India and bring it directly and openly under the Hindu sway within the next few years.

Three great campaigns were laid out with this object in view. Dattaji Shinde was ordered to march towards the Punjab and Multan and introduce order and regular government in the newly conquered provinces. He had thence to come down to Kashi, Prayag, where Raghunath Rao was to meet him at the head of another army. Thence the allied Maratha armies were to march on to Bengal, and free the whole province right to the seas by sweeping it clear of the Moslem and of the English who but recently had won a battle at Plassey (1757) and aimed to make themselves the masters thereof. While Dattaji, Jankoji, and Raghunath Rao were thus charged to reduce all North from Sind and Multan to the seas, the task of liberating all South was undertaken by Balaji himself with Vishwasrao, his son, and Sadashivrao Bhau.

Accordingly, Dattaji, with his forces, started towards the North. Balaji and Bhau first undertook the task of reducing the Nizam to a mere nonentity in the Deccan. They marched against him with a powerful army and up-to-date artillery, and, after several monœuvres and fights, won one of the most

decisive victories at Udgir in 1760 A. D. The Moslem forces were simply crushed, the Nizam so cowed down as to deliver his own Royal seals into the hands of Bhau and humbly express his readiness to sign any conditions the victors dictated. A treaty was signed by which the great forts of Nagar, Barahanpur, Salher, Mulher, Ashirgad and Daulatabad, as well as the four districts of Nanded, Fulumbri, Ambed and Vizapur, were handed over to the Marathas. Even Bhau was satisfied with the result. "The Nizam ceases to be a power. But for the North, all Deccan would have been liberated before this year passed." At last the Maratha colours rose above the reduced capitals of Nagar and Vizapur, the kings whereof used to laugh contemptously at the little rebel when Shivaji took Torana and openly hoisted the flag of a Hindu revolt.

After these great diplomatic and military achievements, the victor of Udgir meant to march on and crush Haidar Ali who, besieging Mysore and trying to upset the ancient Hindu dynasty there, had set himself in its stead. The Hindu king and his minister sent pressing and personal appeals to the Marathas to save them from the new Moslem adventurer's ambition. Sadashivrao Bhau, only too eager to seize this opportunity, crush Haidar Ali and complete his task of liberating all Deccan, meant immediately to march against Haidar Ali, but for the serious news that just then reached the Peshwa from

the North. The cup of success, Bhau writes, was snatched away from his hands even while he was raising it to his lips.

The northern division of the Maratha forces that Dattaji led, reached Delhi at the end of 1758. Thence, as ordered, Dattaji proceeded to settle down the newly conquered provinces of Lahore and Multan. He appointed Sabaji Shinde and Trimbak Bapuji to govern them up to Attock, and garrisoned Sarhind, Lahore, and other important places. Then he left the Punjab and came down to undertake the second task allotted to him of crossing the Ganges and marching on Patna, and then to settle his account with the English and extend the Hindu sway to the sea.

But here he committed a great mistake in not carrying out the orders of the Peshwa as regards Nazibkhan, who, instead of being severely dealt with by the Shindia, was actually allowed to increase his power and influence in return for the vaguest promises he gave to help Dattaji in his campaign in Bengal and render faithful service. The Peshwa wrote almost angrily: "You write that Nazib promises to pay 30 lakhs of rupees to us if we appoint him as a Bukshee: touch not a farthing. Nazib is half Abdally: trust him not: nor feed a vile and treacherous reptile." But Dattaji was almost hypnotised by that consummate hypocrite and actually depended on his promises to build a bridge of boats to cross the Ganges. Thus delaying the Maratha

campaign in Bengal on the one hand, Nazib got ample opportunity, on the other, to form in secret a second and far more formidable coalition against the Marathas and succeeded in inducing the Moslem Emperor himself to send autograph letters to Abdally to try again and invade India once more. Fervent appeals were made to rouse Pathan fanaticism in the name of religion and Allah and all that was sacred to a Moslem. Would not Abdally be the Defender of the Faith, a gazi, and rescue the Muhammadan empire in India from the death-grip of the unbelieving idolators? Abdally too was simply smarting under the defeats the Marathas had inflicted on his son. They had snatched away the Imperial Crown of India from him. Nay, they had driven him from the Punjab and Multan, and were actually claiming Kabul and Kandahar as a part of their Indian Empire, and yet he could do nothing to pay them back. But now he saw his chance had come again and under better auspices than ever. Once more he determined to bid for the Imperial Crown of India and crush the ambitious designs of the Marathas to establish a Hindu-pad-padashahi in India which had well nigh been actualised. So Abdally eagerly promised to lead the coalition, and with a mighty army crossed the Indus and rapidly reached Lahore and occupied it.

As the news of Abdally's invasion reached Delhi, Nazib threw off the mask and openly gave himself

out as his sworn adherent. Now Dattaji saw the fatal mistake he had committed in not acting on the Peshwa's advice. He saw also how thoroughly he had been duped by Nazib and Suja, and how dangerously he was hemmed in by powerful armies of the foe. On one side was Suja, on another Nazib and the Rohillas and Pathans, and Abdally from behind was rapidly advancing with a mighty force. The small Maratha garrisons at Attock and Lahore had necessarily to fall back before the overwhelming forces of Abdally. The only Hindu section that, besides the Marathas, kept opposing the Muhammadan power in the North was the new rising Sikhs. This brave people did all they could to hamper and hit the alien foes. But they were as yet but getting forged into an organised power, and had not been able to liberate even their own province. That day was yet to come. So Abdally led his mighty forces rapidly on Sarhind without facing any serious opposition. The majority of the Hindu princes of Rajputana and elsewhere in the North actually sympathised with Abdally, the destroyer of Mathura and the sworn enemy of Hundudom. The only obstacle that stood between Abdally and the Imperial Crown at Delhi was that one division of the Marathas which Dattaji led. He had written to Holkar to march forthwith to his help. But that general, the adopted father of Nazib, thought it fit to busy himself in wrangling with petty chiefs here and there. Thus hemmed in by the overwhelming

forces of the foe all round, there was only one way for the Maratha division to save themselves, and that was to leave Delhi and fall back. Every experienced and even brave man pressed Dattaji to withdraw and wait till Holkar joined him. Even Jankoji, the gallant youth, requested his uncle to fall back. But Dattaji would not listen. The consciousness of having been the cause of involving his section into an overwhelming catastrophe, through his credulity, weighed heavily on his mind. He determined not to add cowardice to the credulity that had spared and trusted Nazib, the arch enemy of the Marathas. He returned only one reply to all pressure to withdraw : "Let them withdraw who like. I press none. But I myself must stick to my post ; how can I show my face to Nana and Bhau in this life ? I will face Abdally and, God willing, vanquish him in the field, or die fighting in the attempt."

In the meanwhile, Gaziuddin had discovered that the emperor was a party to the Pathani plot against his life and position. So he took the emperor out, put him to death, seated another person on the throne and joined the Maratha forces.

True to his words, Dattaji faced Abdally at Kurukshetra. His personal valour so enthused the Maratha soldiers that they actually forced Abdally to fall back and convinced him that he could not hold out long single-handed against the Shindia. So he attempted to cross, and succeeded in crossing, the

Jumna and joined Nazibkhan's forces at Shukratal. Suja too met him there, and Ahmedkhan Bangash and Kutub Shah as well. The Moslem coalition grew more formidable than ever. It was now clear that the single division under Dattaji could not stem the tide. Again his advisers requested Dattaji to fall back: "Let him go who likes: Dattaji must do the duty of a soldier." Such words, from the lips of such a general, could not but have their effect. None left him. On the 10th January 1760, the Marathas marched out to hold the ghats of the Jumna and repel the forces of Abdally that attempted to cross the river. The fight began. Bayaji, Maloji, leader after leader of the Marathas, fought valiantly and fell, facing heavy odds. The opponents mixed and griped each other. Accidentally the banner of Maharashtra got surrounded by the crowding Pathan and Rohilla forces. The Marathas rushed to rescue it. The fight thickened. Dattaji and Jankoji, unable to bear the sight of their national banner in danger, both rushed in and engaged in an epic fight. Just then a bullet struck Jankoji, and the gallant youth fell wounded from his horse. Dattaji saw it and, instead of fighting back to a safer position rushed headlong ahead, striking the foes as one possessed and, followed by his faithful follower, soon got inextricably mixed with the enemy forces. At last the inevitable came. Dattaji was hit by a bullet and fell mortally wounded on the ground.

Kutub Shah, the religious preceptor of Nazibkhan and one of the zealots who led the Pathani plot, saw it ; he advanced towards the fallen Maratha general and inquired, with ironical bitternesss: "Well, Patel: will you fight again and against us ?" "Yes," replied the dying and undaunted Dattaji. "If I survive, I will fight again." These words exasperated the zealot still more aud angrily he kicked the fallen hero, drew his sword, cut off and carried Dattaji's head in triumph as that of a kafir.

Thus Dattaji fell. No soldier in the world defended his national colours more faithfully, or died in defending them more valiantly, than he.

The news of the fall of Dattaji and the mean and dastardly insults heaped upon that dying hero reached Maharashtra and set it aflame. The whole people rose like one man and demanded vengeance.

They had only that week won a splendid battle at Udgir and meant to crush Haidar and finish the task of liberating all South. Just then the news of Dattaji's defeat and death reached them. Balaji and Bhau lost not a moment in preparing themselves to meet the momentous issue. In spite of their having that very week fought out a great campaign in the south, they denied themselves and their forces the rest of a single day, ordered their generals and councillors to assemble at Patdur, discussed the serious question in all its bearing and decided to despatch a powerful army to face Abdally and fight him out before he

could reach Malwa. The flower of the Maratha nation joined the forces. Samsher Bahadur, Vithal Shivdeo, Manaji Dhaigude, Antaji Mankeshwar, Mane, Nimbalker and several other veterans and generals assumed their respective commands. Bhau, the victor of Udgir, was appointed generallissimo, and the youthful prince, Vishwasrao, the eldest son of Balaji, who had only recently distinguished himself at Udgir and was the rising hope of his nation, accompanied Bhau. Ibrahim Khan Gardi commanded the most efficient artillery of the time. Damaji Gaikwad, Santoji Wagh and other Maratha generals continued joining, as the army advanced. Letters and messengers were despatched to the several Rajput courts in the North to win them over to the Hindu cause and persuade them to join hands with the Marathas, at least in their attempt to fight the foe of Hindudom, the destroyer of Mathura and Gokul. Crossing Vindhyadri and the Narbada, the Maratha army reached the Chambal. All north stood awed at the sight of the strength and the splendour it presented. All disaffected elements, Rajas and Raos, Nabobs and Khans, got cowed down and dared not raise a finger against them. Soon Jankoji Shinde, too, came with his division and joined Bhau. The whole Maratha camp received that young prince, as handsome as brave, with enthusiasm and love, and in him honoured the memories of Dattaji, his uncle, who fell in the battle of Badan. Bhau called a general assembly in honour of the valiant prince

who, though within his teens, had fought battles, won victories and borne several dangerous wounds in the defence of his people and his faith, and publicly showered on him valuable presents and robes of honour. When Vishwasrao, the gallant and noble youth who, in the absence of Balaji, was the beloved leader of the Maratha nation, advanced to meet the valiant young Jankoji, every Maratha heart in that vast national concourse was moved. The two splendid youths,—both so handsome, so brave and so devoted to the aspirations and ideals of their people,—were the Rising Hope of the Hindu nation.

Malharrao Holkar, too, came in. He had already paid a heavy price for his suicidal folly in adopting Nazibkhan and being deliberately negligent in advancing to Dattaji's help before it was too late, and been badly beaten by Abdally after the fall of Dattaji. Now Bhau meant to cross the Jumna and beat Abdally before he could advance to face him on this side of the river. He had ordered Govindpant Bundela to attack, whenever possible to do so, the rear of Abdally's forces and cut off his supplies. But the rivers were in floods and it was difficult to cross them in the face of the powerful enemy moving along the other bank. So Bhau decided to march on to Delhi and recover it from the hands of Abdally's forces there. Of all Hindu princes in the North the Jat alone came over to the Marathas. Bhau personally advanced to receive him with great honours, and both

of them swore to fight out Adbally, and fight to a finish, by the sacred waters of the Jumna.

The eyes of all people now turned towards Delhi. The Hindus and the Moslems both realised the great moral effect that the occupation of Delhi—the historical capital—meant. Bhau sent forth the forces of Shindia, Holkar and Balwantrao Mehendale to attack Delhi. The Pathans who held it fought well. But unable to hold it against the Marathas, they ultimately surrendered the city. The fort too held out bravely, but well directed guns of the powerful Maratha artillery soon rendered it untenable and the Muhammadan forces there gave in. The news of the fall of the capital and the fort caused great rejoicings in the hearts of all lovers of the Hindu cause. The Maratha forces made a triumphant entry into the capital, and Bhau planted the Maratha colours on the fort of the capital of the Pandavas. It was for the first time that the Hindu forces, or as they proudly styled themselves, "the forces of the Haribhaktas, the worshippers of Hari," effected a triumphant entry into Delhi under an independent Hindu banner ever since the days of Prithviraj. The Moslem crescent set the banner of Hindu-pad-padashahi rose at last over the capital of the Indian Empire in spite of all that the Pathans and the Rohillas, the Moguls or the Turks, the Shaiks or the Sayads, could do against it. Abdally, with all the powerful allied forces of the Moslems, was but on the other bank of the Jumna and yet could do nothing to prevent it.

Sadashivrao Bhau felt that his dream of the Hindu-pad-padashahi was--be it for a day--but realised before his eyes. To bring about and render the birth of even one such day possible justifies the exsistence of a nation. Such a day, even in its short span of life, focuses in its rising splendour the activities and achievements, the rejoicings and sufferings, the trials and tribulations, of centuries of national exsistence. For, that day proved beyond cavil or criticism that seven centuries of Moslem persecution and power had failed to crush the Hindu spirit or its vital faculty of rejuvenation. They had, not only proved themselves equal to, but had ultimately prevailed over their foes.

Bhau, left to himself, would have got Vishwasrao crowned as the Emperor of all India, and thus ceremoniously ushered in Hindu-pad-padashahi. But he rightly doubted the political wisdom of such an immediate step. For he knew that, not only the Muhammadans who still hesitated to take sides through the fear of the Marathas,--but alas!—also even the Hindu princes in the north would be totally alienated by such a step as that. Still he determined to test the temper of the people and also not to let pass such an unique occasion without impressing its momentous meaning on the minds of the people of all Hindustan, friends and foes alike. So he ordered an Imperial Assembly to be held in honour of the great event, and the gallant and valiant Vishwasrao

presided over it. All Maharashtra was represented there : nay, the flower of Hindu valour and wealth and statesmanship and learning shone brightly there. Royal rejoicings commenced. Cavalry and artillery, thousands of horses and elephants, tens of thousands of soldiers and warriors that had carried the Hindu colours from the Godavari to the Indus in the north and to the seas in the south, burst forth in victorious salutes through thousands of trumpets and horns and guns and big martial drums. Then, general after general, and statesmen and sardars and governors and viceroys, humbly advanced, did hearty homage to their beloved prince, as they would do to their Emperor who presided over their nation, and tendered him the honours of a victor. All who witnessed that splendid scene knew what it meant. All who took part in it realised that it was but a rehearsal of a great coronation wherein this youthful Hindu prince would—God willing—be crowned as the greatest Hindu Emperor of all Hindustan.

CHAPTER XIV

PANIPAT

> "From the field of his fame fresh and gory:
> We carved not a line, we raised not a stone,
> But we left him alone with his glory."
>
> C. Wolfe.

THE Muhammadans could not fail to realise the momentous meaning of these proceedings at Delhi.

The news spread like wildfire that the Marathas had crowned their prince as the Emperor of Hindustan. Nazibkhan and other Muhammadan leaders pointed at those events as justifying their fears and attempts to rouse the Muhammadans to the gravity of the situation. They loudly declared that the much dreaded Hindu-pad-padashahi-nay, as Nazib and Muhammadan zealots would deliberately have it—the Brahman padshahi had become an accomplished fact. Let every Muhammadan who was true to his Prophet strike against the forces of the Kafirs !

But in spite of all these emotional ebullitions, self-interest began to weigh more, than all Nazib's and Maulvis' exhortations in the name of Muhammadanism, with Suja and other Moslems. The eyes of even such bigots as the Rohillas began to open. Impressed by the successes the Marathas had won in the very teeth of Abdally's opposition, the supineness with which he could not but keep tolerating them, made them doubt Abdally's power to check the Marathas. Suja actually wrote to Bhau expressing regret for having joined Abdally. Bhau, too, thought it prudent to have him on and declared, through his envoys, that the Marathas did not mean to upset the Mogul Emperor and they would gladly appoint Suja himself as the Vazir of Shah-alum whom they acknowledged as Emperor, provided Suja left Abdally. The Rohillas, too, began to hesitate and talk of deserting Abdally. Seeing how matters were seriously going

against his fortune, Abdally decided to open negotiations with the Marathas and sent his envoys to discuss the terms of peace. But Bhau was the last man to cede the Punjab to Abdally as he proposed. Nor was he likely to be duped by hollow discussions and thus let his opportunity pass of striking the iron while hot. So, even while these negotiations were half-heartedly carried on, he determined to advance towards the north and dislodge Abdally from one of the most important positions he was holding at Kunjpura. It was guarded by a strong force under Samadkhan. Kutub Shah too was there. As soon as they were informed that the Marathas meant to attack it, they made great preparations to defend the place against all comers. Abdally, too, from the other bank of the Jumna sent imperative orders to Samadkhan and Kutub Shah to hold out at all costs, and assured them that he had despatched more forces to their help.

Bhau, leaving Delhi, felt it necessary to replenish his treasury. He had expected Govindpant Bundela to cut off Abdally's supplies and harass his rear and and keep raiding and unsettling the provinces of Suja and the Rohillas. Govindpant disastrously failed in accomplishing any of his allotted tasks. Failing to receive any substantial monetary help from Bundela, Bhau looked round for some other source of replenishing his treasury which was to him the real sinews of war. His attention was drawn towards the rich silver ceiling of the Imperial seat worth some dozens

of lakhs of rupees. He ordered that it be hammered out and sent to the mint. The slavish and the superstitious croaked hoarsely : it is said even the Jat got displeased, thinking it was a sacrilege to thus insult the Imperial seat of the mighty Moguls whom God had willed to enthrone as the Emperors of India. If so, the Jat ought to have remembered that, if every accomplished fact, not excepting even a successful usurpation, betokened the will of Providence and was therefore sacred and divine, then surely the throne that Shivaji had raised at Raigad and which rested, not on any aggression or fanatical tyranny, but on the sacred right of self-defence and freedom and national will to lead an independent life, was also an accomplished fact and therefore divine. But when Aurangzeb came to the Deccan, carrying fire and sword and all the forces of fanaticism and aggression to crush the national life of the Hindus and throttle thus the young Hindu state, did he hesitate to hammer to pieces the throne of Shivaji ? Then, why should they now care a two-pence for the Imperial seat of the Moguls which, to them and to all Hindus, including the Jat himself, meant but an emblem and a source of Satanic power—was bathed in the blood of thousands of Hindu martyrs, was built on the ruins of their temples and homes and hearths ; and whose very existence was their national and political death ? Aurangzeb raised his iron hand to hammer the Imperial seat of Hindudom to pieces : Time and

Nemesis and the guardian angel of Hindustan snatched the hammer from his hand—and behold! to-day his own Imperial seat lay smashed under it.

Paying out the arrears to his soldiers, Bhau advanced towards Kunjpura. Shinde and Holkar and Vithal Shivdeo led the front. The Pathans fought as brave men do. The fort and the town were famous for their natural strength. But when the Marathas brought their excellent guns to bear on it, backed up by the valiant forces of Shindia and other Maratha generals, the Moslems could not hold out against them long. As soon as some breaches were effected in the Moslem defences Damaji Gaikwad ordered his division to rush them and at a formidable shout of *Har! Har!* his soldiers jumped along with their horses headlong through them. A bloody battle ensued. Thousands of Pathans were put to the sword. The fort was taken, the camp of the Moslem was looted and hundreds of their soldiers got captured. Their very general, Samadkhan, fell into the hands of the Marathas. He was captured once before by Raghunath Rao in his last campaign, but was ransomed and spared. He persisted in his deathless opposition to the Marathas and now again fell into their hands.

Bhau, when his battle was well nigh won, was standing, issuing some directions to Holkar and Shindia and admiring the valour of the Hindu forces who finished that work in three days which the enemy expected to cost them as many weeks, if not

months. Just then two important prisoners of war were brought, mounted on elephants, into his presence. The first was Samadkhan, the general of the Pathans who commanded Kunjpura; and the second?—He was Kutub Shah, the religious preceptor of Nazib, one of the most active leaders of the Pathani plot and the man who had kicked the valiant Dattaji while dying and heaped dastardly insults on him as a Kafir.

The sight of Kutub Shah inflamed the Maratha blood. The vengeful memory of Dattaji hovered over the scene. "Are you the man who kicked our dying Dattaji as a Kafir?" "Yes:" replied Kutub Shah. "It is considered pious in our religion to kill an idolator and to treat him contemptuously as a Kafir." "Die then as a dog:" retorted Bhau. The soldier carried the culprit a little aside and beheaded him. Dattaji had been avenged. Samadkhan, too, shared the same fate.

The family of Nazibkhan, too, with his son-in-law and other members, fell captives in the hands of the Marathas. But they were not dealt with so severely as Kutub Shah was. In fact, had those, who were caught fighting, been dealt with thus, Abdally at any rate had no moral right to question the humanity of such a step. For he and his allied Moslem princes were guilty of such barbarous atrocities as to cut the noses of all those Marathas who fell in the battles in the Punjab and at Badan and other places and cutting their heads off heap up that ghastly pile as a trophy of

war in front of his royal tent. Those savage methods could have been imitated by the Marathas too, but all along they refrained from doing so: nor did they distinguish themselves in razing the mosques or burning the Korans or committing sacrileges at the sacred places, as Abdallys and Aurangazebs and Nadirs and Muhammads did on principle.

The fall of Kunjpura was another tremendous blow to Abdally's prestige. The Marathas had then inflicted a crushing defeat on his forces, some 10000 strong, and were celebrating the festival of Vijayadashmi, or the day of victory, with great *eclat* and military pomp almost under his eyes. An able general that he was, he knew that, unless he immediately risked much and distinguished himself by some act of great daring, his cause was lost. Promptly he decided to try the ford at Baghat and at any cost cross the Jumna and cut the Maratha forces at Kunjpura from their base at Delhi.

He succeeded in doing it and thrust his powerful army numbering, hundred thousand strong like a wedge between the Marathas and their line of communication with Delhi. He had secured by this one more advantage to himself that proved in the long run more profitable to him than all his martial strength. It was that, while the Marathas were cut off from their base, his line of communication with the Rohillas and Suja's territory remained intact. But even this he owed, not so much to his move, as to the failure of Govindpant to cut off his supplies as directed by Bhau;

Abdally found the Marathas fully prepared to face him. No sooner had he succeeded in crossing the Jumna at Baghat than Bhau advanced to meet him on the famous field of Kurukshetra and encamped at Panipat. The Marathas felt confident that they would crush Abdally on his ground, if but Govindpant and Gopal Ganesh would do their task well and cut off supplies and harass his rear. But that work Govindpant miserably failed to do. Pressing commands, threats,—Bhau had recourse to all : but Govindpant would not exert himself even as much as he could have done. The Jat had already left the Maratha camp and kept watching the game at a safe distance, from his capital at Bharatpur. Still be it noted to his credit that he at times sent some supplies to the Marathas. But the Rajputs would not do even that. None of them dared to oppose the Marathas, but many of them wished that they were utterly crushed. How far this suicidal hope of these Hindu princes was fulfilled, the future history will show. So although both parties were trying hard to cut each other's line of communication and starve the adversary out and then come to blows; yet, as days passed, it was discovered that starvation vexed the Marathas far more than it did Abdally.

At last on the 22nd of November Jankoji Shindia marched out of his camp and attacked the Moslem forces.The battle raged furiously all along the line. Unable to hold out longer against the splendid valour

of the youthful Maratha general and his veterans, the Moslems fell back by the evening and were beaten and hotly pursued to their camp. Darkness alone saved them that day from a general defeat. The Marathas received their warriors back with victorious salutes. To remove the demoralised effect that this defeat had on the minds of his people, Abdally a fortnight later ordered his chosen divisions to march at dusk and attack the centre of the Maratha position, as soon as night came, under the cover of darkness. But as they advanced they were surprised to find that Balwant Rao Mehendale had forestalled them and was marching with 20000 picked troops to meet them in the field. Immediately the Pathans opened their batteries on the Marathas. As these had not come out with their battery they began to suffer much. Soon it seemed as if the Marathas would waver. But lightning-like their general galloped forth, exhorting his men not to stain the honour of their Flag, rallied them round and, flourishing his sword formidably aloft, ordered a general assault. The Marathas fell on their foes at a gallop, silenced their batteries and came to a death-grip—foremost amongst them being Balwant-Rao Mehendale, their valiant general. In the bloody struggle that ensued a bullet struck the general and he fell dead on the field. The Moslems, seeing this, pounced upon him to cut his head off and carry it in triumph: but Nimbalker threw himself between

their swords and the general's corpse and receiving ghastly cuts on him covered his body till the Marathas rescued it from the foe. By this time thousands of Pathans were cut down and the Moslems found it difficult to hold on any longer. So they first wavered and, then badly beaten, turned their backs and made for their camp, leaving thousands of their comrades dead on the field in front of the Maratha centre. The Marathas had won a great battle. But they had lost a great general. They lovingly bore his corpse to their camp and the military honours of a victor were accorded to his memory. Bhau bewailed the loss more than any one, and personally attended the funeral. The wife of the hero, no less heroic than her husband, determined, in spite of all persuasions that Bhau himself could employ, to mount his funeral pile and immolate herself on it. The whole army came out to pay their last loving respects to their heroic dead. Tens of thousands of souls stood reverently round the pile saluting the distinguished dead and the constancy of the Maratha girl that sat wrapped in flames fondling the head of her dead lover securely resting on her lap.

Thus Abdally gave two battles and in both of them he was worsted. But this did not enable the Marathas to solve the question of starvation. Doubtless Govindpant had, by this time, begun to stir himself and cut off the food supplies of Abdally; but then, it was too late now. Moreover, that too did not last

long. For Attaikhan, with 10000 Pathans, attacked Govindpant under false colours. The Marathas, seeing the colours of Holkar, took the advancing Pathans to be friends till they actually began to cut them down. At last Govindpant, too, was cut down and lost that life, which, had he risked it four months earlier, when Bhau commanded him to do so, would have in all probabilities saved his nation as well as himself from a great catastrophe. The Pathans cut off Govindpant's head and Abdally was humane enough to send it to Bhau with a number of bragging lines. Still from a military point of view there was every chance of crushing Abdally yet, for, in spite of all his watch and ward, information as to the fix the Marathas were in reached the Deccan; and Balaji with another powerful army, some 50000 strong, was marching to the help of his people. If the Marathas could hold out a month longer at Panipat, Abdally would simply get smashed between the two forces. But what to do with starvation? Hundreds of beasts of burden and even horses daily died for want of fodder. The rotting stink grew into a menace to the health of the army, as dangerous as starvation. The only alternative was a premature fight. The spirited soldiery daily crowded Bhau's tent and movingly prayed that they might rather be allowed to face death in the battlefield than keep rotting and starving out. But was there not yet another alternative to starvation, namely, unconditional,

surrender of the Hindu cause that generations of their forefathers had lived for, worked for, and died for. Would they do that and acknowledge Abdally as the emperor of India and surrender their national independence? No: by no means. Not a Maratha would vote for that: they would rather brave fearful odds, distressed and starved out though they were, and facing the foe fight in such a wise that even if they be not able to gain success for themselves they would yet render the success of their foe utterly futile to him. Amongst men of this temper stood Bhau like a pyramid of strength and unconquerable courage, dauntlessly determined not to give in, not to do anything derogatory to the national honour of his people, but if the worst came to the worst to win—if not a success—yet at least such a defeat as would be a greater source of constant inspiration and pride and national glory to generations of his people yet unborn than many a success could ever be.

A military council of urgency was summoned, and it was decided to move fully prepared for a battle and march forth to Delhi and, if opposed, to attack Abdally, cut his ranks and fight their way out. The *if* was unnecessary. Abdally was not the man to let them pass.

Thousands upon thousands of warriors, the forces of the "worshippers of Hari," gathered round the great Jaripataka, the golden geruwa standard of their nation. Soon Bhau, their commander-in-chief, rose

to announce the decision their leaders had arrived at as to their future move. As soon as it was told that they had decided to give a decisive battle to the foe, the vast armed concourse burst out in a tremendous shout of approval. The plan of action was explained. Then the great leader made a stirring appeal to his men, pointing to the great national standard under whose folds they stood and which with mute eloquence traced its far-famed history : how Ramdas handed it over to Shivaji as a constant reminder of a great mission of "Swadharma-Rajya," of Hindu-pad-padashahi : how their fathers, how their immortal dead, carried it from triumph to triumph and brought all Hindustan from Attock to Arcot and further to all the seas under its folds : how the foes of Hindudom bowed low or fell worsted as it marched forth. Would they now surrender it or bend it low or die fighting in defence of the cause it represented ? A hundred thousand warriors burst into *Har, Har, Mahadeva* ! and flourishing their swords swore allegiance to the national colours and to the great cause they represented and to their commander who had led them from victory to victory.

As the morning of the 14th January rose, it found the Marathas marching out of their camp in full battle array. Bhau and Vishwasrao led the centre. On their right side stood Jankoji and Malharrao Holkar at the head of their forces. Their left was led by Damaji

Gaikwad, Yeshwantrao Powar, Antaji Mankeshwar, Vithal Shivdev, and Samsher Bahadar. They had posted their excellent artillery in front of them all under the command of Ibrahimkhan Gardi, a brave officer who, though a Muhammadan, remained faithful to his masters even unto death. Thus formidably arrayed the Marathas left their camp. Hundreds of war drums, trenchant trumpets and battle horns suddenly sounded the march.

As soon as Abdally learnt that the Marathas were marching forth, he too came out to meet them. His centre was led by Shahanawaj Khan, his Vazir. On the right were the Rohillas and on his left stood Nazibkhan and Suja. He, too, had posted his batteries in front of his line.

Soon they met. The guns began their gory work, the march of those vast armies raised huge columns of dust and the smoke of the batteries blackened the sky. The sun lay covered till long after it rose. When the opponents clearly discerned each other, Yeshwantrao Powar and Vithal Shivdev gave the first attack. The fight thickened. The Marathas, at a gallop, forced the Rohillas to fall back, and cut down not less than 8000 of their men. Under the heavy blow the right of the foe reeled and fell back. The central position of the Moslems Bhau and the gallant young Vishwasrao attacked so vigorously that the armies met in a literal death-grip. The Pathans were not enemies to be despised. On the other hand, the

Marathas, too, led by a man like Bhau and their young prince Vishwasrao, were not likely to lose their ground. After a bloody struggle lasting for an hour, Bhau and Vishwasrao broke the iron front of the Pathans led by their Vazir himself. Thousands of them lay slain on the battlefield. The son of the Vazir was cut down and himself unhorsed. The centre of the Moslems fell back. Bhau and Vishwas marched forth, dislodging their foes from position to position. Seeing this, Nazibkhan hastened to the rescue of the Vazir. But following him hotly came the youthful Jankoji, too, at the head of his veteran soldiers to strenghen Bhau's position. The battle grew fierce as never before. All along the line set epic duels began. Abdally saw clearly that his right and left and centre—his whole army—had fallen back and were on the point of getting broken. Soon his men took to flight. But even then he stood undaunted. He ordered his own troops to cut down those who left his ranks and took to flight. The battle had begun at about 8 o'clock in the morning. Since then the formidable struggle was relentlessly going on. It was now nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon. But the soldiers knew no rest or respite. Rivers of blood literally swamped the field. The fearful cries and groans of the wounded and the dying rose and mixed with furious sounds of war drums and trumpets and guns and the war-cries of the brave in a bloody harmony.

It was past two in the afternoon. The Maratha valour and dogged resistance told at last seriously on their Moslem foes. Even Abdally, a veteran general that he was, grew anxious and thought of leaving the field and crossing over to the other side of the Jumna. But he had most wisely left a reserved force of some 10000 soldiers at hand. Detecting that this, if ever, was the psychological moment to throw them in the balance, he ordered them to face Bhau himself. This fresh force fell with lightning speed on the Marathas.

Still Bhau and his men, exhausted since the morn, wavered not. Still the Marathas bore the fresh rush and their first impact with undaunted valour. Once more it was clear that the Marathas had well nigh won the battle. Abdally had played out his last trump.

But just then a bullet, like death's errand, came whizzing by. It struck the heroic prince of the Marathas, and Vishwasrao fell, wounded in the howda. The gallant youth, so handsome and so brave, the hope of a nation, lay mortally wounded in his howda. The news came to Bhau who was fighting at the head of his soldiers enthusing, guiding, smiting and sustaining the most heroic struggle the world had ever seen. The news came on Bhau like a bolt from the blue. The commander hastened towards his beloved nephew and saw him fallen mortally wounded, rolling in his blood in his princely howda. The adamantine heart of the victor of Udgir broke down

for a while, and tears rolled down his cheeks. His voice choked with emotion: "Vishwas ! Vishwas !" he called out sobbing. The dying youth opened his princely eyes and in heroic accents replied : "Dear uncle, why tarry with me now? The battle may go against us while its commander is away." Even death's agony could not make that gallant young prince of Maharashtra forget his duty, his foremost thought was still of the battle, and his anxiety to win it even if after his death. His words roused the warrior once more and Bhau came to himself. "What matters it?" he exclaimed. "I will crush the foe myself." Saying so, he galloped forth, rallying once more his mighty host. The truest and the bravest were still contesting the field and its fortune was still with the Marathas.

But the news of the death of Vishwasrao spread like wildfire amongst the Maratha forces and told disastrously upon their already over-taxed nerves. Just then another mishap happened. A couple of thousands of Pathans had, a month or two ago, deserted Abdally and were employed by Bhau in his army. In order to distinguish them in the battle from the enemy they were made to wear the strip of the Maratha Geruwa colours on their head. They, mostly out of preconcerted intrigue, suddenly threw away their Maratha colours and, spreading a false alarm and the rumour of Vishwasrao's death, rushed to the rear where the camp followers stood and straightway began to loot and kill. The sight of

these Pathans at the rear unsettled the minds of the Marathas and those who fought at the front took it to be a succes of a flank attack of the enemy and thinking that the day was lost, broke and fled.

The foe could hardly believe the sight. He had already thought himself well nigh vanquished. The Marathas had won on the right and the left and in the centre as well. While he was by, taking strictest steps and cutting down his own flying soldiers and thus alone sustaining his lines from breaking into a general rout, to his sudden delight, he saw the Maratha rear somehow or other panic-struck and taking to flight. Before they knew why, the forces of Abdally attacked the panic-stricken line of the Marathas. This was the last straw that broke the back of the Maratha resistance. On their right the battle ceased and became a rout.

But still the battle raged furious where Bhau and his chosen few stood at bay, defending their national standard unto death. " Fight ! kill ! slay!" Smiting and shouting out to his men, Bhau grew hoarse. When he could no longer speak out his fury he nodded encouragement and exhortation as he galloped forth into the very jaws of death. Mukund Shinde, seeing him desperate, ventured to hold his horse a while by the rein and humbly pressed " Commander, thine had been a superhuman valour our men have done all that heroes humanly could do. But now it is wise to retire ! " What ! retire ?"

exclaimed Bhau. "General, seest thou not that Vishwas is dead and the flower of our army fallen on the field? General after general I called out by name and at my bidding fell fighting against the foes. How can I now leave the field and survive to show my face to Nanasaheb and my nation? Smite, smite; smite the foes unto death : this is my last command."

Mukund Shinde saluted his commander and, in obedience to his last orders, jumped down from his horse, raised his sword with a *Har, Har, Mahadev*! flung himself headlong in the midst of the foes. The youthful Jankoji, Yashvant Rao Powar, hero after hero, did the same : and Bhau? he too, as if possessed by the spirit of war, rushed headlong, got inextricably lost in the thickest of the battle, true to his words, smiting in defence of the national cause, 'even unto death'.

This was the last news that ever reached the world about the valiant commander-in-chief of the Hindu forces at Panipat—that he redeemed, by the spiritual grandeur of his valour and dutiful death, the material loss that his nation suffered at Panipat.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEFEAT THAT VANQUISHED THE VICTOR AS WELL

"दंतच्छेदोहि नागानाम् श्लाघ्यो गिरिविदारणे"

THE loss was formidable, for, while Bhau along

with the bravest that followed him was sustaining an unequal struggle round their national standard, the Marathas were getting completely routed all along the line, hotly pursued by the foes. Thousands fell dead. Thousands were made prisoners whom the next morning their furious victor made to stand in row after row and butchered in cold blood. The booty the Afghans got was also immense.

But immense also was the price that the Maratha valour had succeeded in exacting from their foes. The Pathans won the victory, but it was pyrrhic. On the last day alone they lost no less than 40000 Moslem soldiers on the battlefield. Attaikhan, the general who cut off Govindpant's head, Usman and several other leaders of their forces were cut down. Nazib was seriously wounded. Moreover, they knew that they owed their success as much to chance as to their estimable valour and excellent generalship.

The Marathas lost the battle: but not without inflicting on their foe such severe wounds as to invalid him permanently to win the war.

For, what if the battle of Panipat was lost? The Marathas at Panipat were crushed: but then, the Marthas yet lived in Maharashtra. Each home, they say, had to mourn the loss of some one of their relations, that fell on the ghastly day of Panipat. Yet there was scarcely a home then in Maharashtra that did not vow to redeem their national honour and render the martyrdom of their soldiers and generals fruitful by

winning the cause for which they fell. Already the Peshwa had crossed the Narbada at the head of some 50000 Maratha forces to check Abdally's programme On learning of the catastrophe that befell his people, and his family in particular, Nanasaheb decided to press ahead in spite of Panipat and destroy Abdally's strength before he could utilize the defeat and resulting demoralization of the Maratha armies in the north. Although his personal sorrow was truly unbearable and his health already seriously broken, yet it only added to his zeal to avenge his people and beat Abdally back. He wrote letters to all the Hindu princes in the north full of courage, remonstrating with them on the suicidal policy they thought it wise to adopt of standing aside while the foes of their faith and of all Hindudom were putting forth united efforts to crush the cause of Hindu Independence altogether. He invited them all to join him in the War of Hindu Liberation and assured them that, in spite of the defeat at Panipat, he would render futile the ambition of Abdally to re-establish a powerful Moslem Empire on the ruins of that of the Moguls. "What matters it ?" he wrote : ' true it is that my young prince, Vishwas rao, fell fighting his foe even as Abhimanyu did and ascended to Heaven. My brother Bhau and the gallant Jankoji—none knows what has become of them: several other generals and men have fallen on the field. But then, after all it is war. The question of success or defeat often depends on chance—the will

of God. So it matters not much. We will see to it again in spite of it all."

Such undying tenacity—this faculty of staying out that the Marathas displayed under great national disasters made them masters of India. Abdally was too shrewd to misunderstand the temper of his foes or undervalue their capacity. No sooner was the day of Panipat won than he saw that, unless he rapidly withdrew to his country, he would soon be forced to disgorge what little he had gained. Nanasaheb had rallied round himself all his sardars and men that survived Panipat. Malharrao Holkar, Vithal Shivdev, Naro Shanker, Janoji Bhosale and several other generals with their forces were concentrating in Gwalior and along with them Nanasaheb threatened to march on Delhi. This attitude of the Marathas made Suja, and even Nazibkhan, nervous, who got convinced that the winning of the battle of Panipat was not to win the war against the Marathas. So they independently opened negotiations with, and made flattering advances to, Nanasaheb who had already come so far as Gwalior. Suja realized the fact that Abdally could not singly, or allied with them, crush the Hindus, or prop up the tottering edifice of the Moslem Empire. The Muhammadan camp broke up. Each began to seek his safety. Suja left Abdally. Abdally came to Delhi and remained there for a few weeks. Nanasaheb, with 50000 men was pressing him from behind. The Persians were reported to have

invaded his home. This distracted the great conqueror who determined to leave Delhi and the Imperial politics to themselves, and in March 1761 hurriedly re-crossed the Indus without being able to realise even one of those ambitious designs which goaded him on to cross it.

This was the last of the series of attempts the Indian Muhammadans made to save their Empire from the attacks of the Hindus by joining hands with their fierce co-religionist across the frontiers. They won the battle of Panipat, and in winning it they lost the last chance of either crushing the great Hindu power of the Maratha Confederacy, or rescuing their Moslem Empire from the deathgrip with which they clutched at its throat.

Never again were the Pathans able to reach Delhi. Soon they were to cease to cross the Indus itself.

For, on the ruins of Panipat another Hindu power rapidly rose in the Punjab. That power was the rising confederacy of the Sikhs. These brave people had slowly built up their Church which, often cemented by the blood of martyrs, promised soon to rise into a powerful state. Under the leadership of their tenth Guru, the lionlike Govind, and Banda the warrior and the martyr,—both of whom will ever continue to be worshipped amongst the greatest of national heroes of the Hindu Pantheon,—the Sikhs fought for the cause of Hindu Independence in the Punjab. Under Banda they succeeded for a while

in liberating a part of their land. But the task of dealing a death-blow to the Muhammadan power in the Punjab and bringing the holy land of the five rivers under Hindu sway was reserved for the Marathas. This they accomplished, and, though they were fighting far off from their homes and had to beard the lion in his own den, they did it and carried the Hindu standard right up to Attock for the first time, since the days of Prithviraj. While the repeated attempts of the Moslems and of their great coalitions under Nadir Shah and Abdally to revive the Moslem power in India were being brought to naught by the dogged resistance of the Marathas, the Sikhs were getting a breathing time to organise themselves into a powerful confederacy. This new Hindu power deprived Abdally of whatever little satisfaction he might have reaped, in return for the tremendous price he had to pay throughout his Panipat campaign, by annexing the Punjab anew to his dominions. For although the Punjab thus slipped off from the hands of the Hindus of Maharashtra, it could not continue in the hands of the Moslems. For the Hindus of the Punjab attacked Abdally's posts as soon as he turned his back and, in spite of his twice crossing the Indus again, recovered their native land. Soon the Marathas too re-entered Delhi—once more became the leading sovereign power of all Hindustan. The Sikhs, too, though they never could extend their sway beyond their frontiers even up to Delhi on the

eastern side, yet grew powerful enough to maintain their independence against all comers from across the frontiers. Never again would the fierce fanaticism or the insatiable lust of land of the Pathans, or the Turks, goad them on to cross the Indus. On the contrary, the Sikhs crossed it and, carrying the Hindu standard triumphantly up to the banks of the Kabul, paid back the compliment. So thoroughly had they cowed down the fanatical turbulence of the Moslem tribes of the frontier districts that the name of the Sikhs became a synonym of terror in the Pathan homes.

Thus from the Pan-Hindu point of view, the Muhammadans failed to gain their objective. They won the battle of Panipat, but, in winning it, they lost the war they had been waging against those who aimed to establish Hindu-pad-padashahi and, in spite of Panipat, had to leave the Hindus masters of all Hindustan, from Attock to the seas.

But while the Hindus were fighting out this gigantic national struggle against their Muhammadan foes in the north, yet another combatant managed slyly to creep into the lists and kept watching the fierce game. It was he who more than any one else had every reason to chuckle at the fall at Panipat, which, dealing out heavy blows to both the combatants there, forced the Marathas to postpone their intended invasion of Bengal and consequent strangling of the infant English power that was only recently born

there on the plains of Plassey. If any one really won at Panipat, it was neither of the combatants who so furiously fought there, it was that sly intruder who kept watching the game and was clever enough to take advantage of the weaknesses of both the combatants.

But, although it is true that Panipat gave a new lease of life to the East India Company and forced the Marathas to drop a while their intentions of settling their final accounts with the English, yet it must not therefore be supposed that the English secured any very lasting advantage thereby alone. For the Marathas—as we shall see as we proceed—soon recovered from the shock of Panipat, and, but for the civil war that broke out amongst them and the untimely death of their able leaders, would have perhaps been able to win even against the English in spite of Panipat. The English owed their success, not so much to the defeat of the Marathas at Panipat, as to the civil war that later on broke out amongst them.

For, as Major Evans Ball writes: "Even the battle of Panipat was a triumph and a glory for the Marathas. They fought in the cause of India for the Indians and though they were defeated, the victorious Afghans retired (had to) and never again interfered in the affairs of India."

As the news of Abdally's precipitate return and Suja's and Nazib's supplicating overtures reached the Maratha camp, they naturally rejoiced at the

favourable turn events had taken. Naro Shanker wrote just within a couple of months after Panipat: "God be praised: the Marathas—or to quote Hingne—'the forces of the worshippers of Hari' still continue to be the masters of Ind :" the heroic phrase that their great leader had uttered leapt from lip to lip and every one in Maharashtra was found exclaiming, " what does it matter ? after all it is a war. We will see to it again."

In the meanwhile the health of Nanasaheb was going from bad to worse. For the last two years or so, he was showing signs of a general breakdown. Just then came the harrowing news of Panipat. He strove as bravely as a man could under the stress to bear it all, and, suppressing his personal sorrow, enthused and enabled his nation to tide over the demoralization of a defeat and rise equal to the occasion to present a bold and conquering front to all. But, in his heart, the loss of his Vishvas and his Bhau and the bravest of his generals and men overwhelmed him with grief that nothing could solace. His already declining health rapidly broke, and soon this great leader of Maharashtra who had made her mistress of all Ind passed away on the 23rd of June 1761. He was only 41 when he died.

It is needless to say anything here as to his capacity and character. His deeds have already spoken louder than words can ever do. His civil administration, too, was so just and popular that his reign is

still gratefully remembered by his people. It was reserved for him to practically realise Shivaji's ambition of establishing Hindu-pad-padashahi. He, in fact, freed almost all Hindustan from the hands of Moslems. Under him the Hindus reached the highest pinnacle of glory they ever attained for the last seven hundreds years or so—ever since the fall of Prithviraj. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest personalities—if not the greatest—of his time in the world.

This untimely death of Balaji, alias Nanasaheb, was a loss as great as—if not greater than—the loss the Marathas had to face at Panipat. The two crowded so disastrously together that the nation very naturally took some time to recover from the shock.

CHAPTER XVI

MADHAO RAO THE VIRTUOUS

"भुवमधिपति र्बालावस्थोऽप्यलं परिरक्षितुम
न खलुवयसा जात्यैवायं स्वकार्यसहोभरः"

THE enemies of Maharashtra, seeing it left practically leaderless by the death of Nanasaheb and expecting the Maratha Confederacy to collapse under the heavy blow it had to face at Panipat, rose and beset her on all sides. Haidar found the opportunity to usurp the the Government of Mysore from the hands of his Hindu master and sovereign and invade the Maratha territories from the south. The Nizam at Hyderabad

had made feverish preparations to avenge his defeat at Udgir. The English strove to snatch as much as they could. Not only the Muhammadans in the north, but even the Rajputs and the Jats and several other principalities revolted against the Marathas, each trying to feather their own nest as best as they could. To make the matter yet worse, the treacherous ambition of Raghunath Rao threatened to usher in a civil war and divide the Maratha camp into hostile factions, precisely when their nation was likely to be overwhelmed by their foes and the cause of Hindu Independence it represented fall with its fortunes.

The enormous reponsibility of leading the realm under such exceptional difficulties fell on Madhao Rao, the second son of Balaji, who was then but a youth of 17. But fortunately for his nation he was endowed with such extraordinary abilities and personal magnetism and was so devoted to the great mission of Hindu-pad-padashahi for which his fathers had bled that under his guidance, his nation tided well over their difficulties and held their position as the leading political power of India against all those who challenged it.

First, the Nizam tried his luck. Fancying the Marathas were dead as a power, he aimed to advance straight towards Poona. To flout their claim as the defenders of the Hindu Faith, he even insulted and destroyed the Hindu temples at Tonk. But he was

bitterly disappointed when he found that the Marathas rushed from all quarters to defend their capital and faced him, 80000 strong. He suffered a defeat at Urali and had to fall back. But as Raghunath Rao was mean-minded enough to begin his intrigues and divided the Maratha people against his own nephew, the young Madhao Rao, the Nizam once more came out with a powerful army to crush the Marathas while they were yet divided. Bhonsle and some other sardars had actually gone over to his side. But, as often happened in the Maratha history, the denationalised and selfish tendencies, which broke from time to time the political solidarity of their people, were sooner or later counter-balanced and even corrected by the instinctive national impulse that, in spite of all egoistic aberrations, remained long the chief determining factor in their character. The Maratha sardars who, owing to the bitterness engendered by the civil war, had joined the Nizam against the Peshwa, deserted their unnatural ally and at a very critical moment came over to the Maratha camp. The Nizam was left in the lurch. A great battle was fought at Rakshas Bhuvan in 1763 A. D., in which once again the united power of the Marathas won a splendid victory over the Moslems. The Diwan of the Nizam lay slain. Not less than 22 of his sardars were wounded and captured, his guns and all military stores falling in the hands of the Marathas. Humiliated and humbled, the Nizam, who came out to recover

all he had lost at Udgir and had the audacity to claim the right of nominating the Karbhari at Poona, had to hand over to the Marathas territory yielding 82 lakhs of rupees for being allowed to go back. This was the first battle in which the young Peshwa fought and distinguished himself so splendidly that his people instinctively recognised in him a leader fit to guide their nation and lead it against all odds.

Having thus convinced the Nizam that the Hindu strength remained unchallengeably superior in spite of Panipat, Madhao Rao proceeded to teach the same lesson to that adventurous soldier who, taking advantage of the Panipat campaign, had founded a new Moslem State at Mysore on the ruins of the old Hindu principality and invaded the Maratha territories up to the the Krishna river. In 1764 A. D. Madhao Rao marched against Haidar. Dharwad was re-occupied by the Marathas; and Ghorpade, Vinchurker, Patwardhan and other generals pressed Haidar and hemmed him in on all sides. A clever general and a tough soldier though he was, Haidar soon found it impossible to hold out long against his foes after a tenacious fight at Rattihalli. At last he tried to effect a clever retreat, but was forestalled by Madhao Rao on his way to Bednur. A battle was forced upon him with disastrous results to the Moslem forces. Madhao Rao personally led the charge with such a vigour that Haidar's army was thoroughly routed. Even the most efficient troops trained by the

French that Haidar possessed got badly beaten and thousands of horses and camels and field artillery fell in the hand of the victorious Marathas. All further opposition was useless. Haidar sued for peace, left the Marathas masters of all they had conquered and paid 22 lakhs of rupees as the arrears of his tribute and the Chowthai.

Madhao Rao, left to himself, would not have allowed Haidar to escape even on these terms. But the vile greed of Raghunath Rao proved a greater curse to the Maratha arms than a Haidar or a Nazibkhan. He more than once rose in open revolt against the young Peshwa, just when he was carrying on victorious campaigns against the foes of the Hindu power. Nothing could quench Raghoba's thirst for power, and the power he was the most incapable of all men to wield. Left free, he returned to his treacherous designs of allying himself with the non-Hindu States against his own nephew. Whenever defeated and captured and imprisoned he, like so many other sickly sentimentalists, refused to take food and threatened to die of self-imposed starvation. The fate of such a troublesome claimant to a Mogul throne would have been speedily and easily determined by a small drop of poison or a sharp little dagger covered by smiles or even the tears of the ruling chief. But the young Brahman prince was nobility and piety personified. He even went so far as to write to his uncle on a proposal of partitioning the kingdom being advanced

by him in terms of utter surrender. " Uncle," wrote Madhao Rao, 'you talk of partitioning this realm. But think who is the master of this mighty kingdom. Is it a private and personal property ? Thousands have worked for it to render it so great, so glorious. The power of state must ever remain concentrated in one guiding hand. But how can this kingdom continue to maintain its greatness and strength when it gets divided and parcelled out as personal effects are ? No, no; far better for me to efface myself altogether and leave you the sole and uncontested leader of this commonwealth than consent to its division and be a party to its weakness. I will rather resign all my claim to leadership and enlist myself as a common soldier in your ranks, picking up whatever morsels you throw out to me, than hand down my name to further generations as that of one who sacrificed the Empire of Maharashtra to his personal greed."

But the Marathas as a nation could never have tolerated a man so fickle-minded and so incapable as Raghoba, even if he had assumed the leadership of Maharashtra, while the brave, the just and the most virtuous of the Peshvas yet lived.

CHAPTER XVII

PANIPAT AVENGED

"To their Benefactors the Marathas are grateful, to their enemies relentless. If they are insulted they will risk their lives to avenge themselves."

Hiuen Tsang.

NEITHER these domestic distractions, nor the treacherous civil wars, nor the rise of such new and dangerous enemies as Haidar and Tippu, could make the Marathas forget their duty to avenge the day of Panipat and inflict condign punishment on all those who dared to go against them there. For some time after the death of Nanasaheb, Holkar and Shinde were the two chief Maratha sardars who kept guarding their national interests in the north as best as they could. When the civil troubles and intrigues of Raghoba could be fairly managed, Madhao Rao in 1769 determined to despatch a punitive expedition to the north under the command of Binivale. All Maratha generals in the north were ordered to join the force. Crossing the Narbada with a set purpose of resuming the direction and control of the Hindu Empire and of inflicting a crushing penalty on all those Indian principalities who had dared to pray for and work for the ruin of the Maratha power since 1161 A. D., the powerful Maratha army reached Bundelkhand, quelled the petty disturbances there and punishing the recalcitrant princelets and princes on their way, reached the Chambal without much serious

opposition. The Jat showed fight and refused to hand over Agra and other forts he had usurped since the day of Panipat. Near Bharatpur a pitched battle was fought. The Jat contested the field as bravely as heroes do, but unable to hold long against the Maratha forces, they broke and fled leaving thousands of their comrades dead on the fleld and all their camp with elephants and horses and war material fell in the hands of the Marathas. Soon after their leader, Navabsing, sued for peace and returning all Maratha possessions he held, paid in 65 lakhs of rupees to them as his accumulated tribute. Now the advancing Maratha army marched forth towards the gates of Delhi, expecting their sworn enemy there would put up some fight against them. But the old fox, that wily Nazibkhan, was again all humility and repentance, the very news of the victorious march of the Marathas brought him to the camp as a supplicant for life. He returned all his spoils in the Doab, smoothened the way of the Marathas to Delhi, and would do anything for them, if but pardoned and allowed to live that he might conspire once more against them as soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself. But this time nothing seemed likely to shield him from the vengeance of the Marathas had not Death himself intervened and shielded the author of Panipat from the wrath of the countrymen of those who had fallen there.

The Marathas entered Delhi : there was none to contest the capital of Akbar and Aurangzeb.

Ahmedshah Abdally, who contested it last, had at last come to terms and had already opened negotiations with the Peshwa and sent his envoys to Poona. There after protracted deliberations the parties reached an understanding by which Ahmedshah Abdally virtually promised to cease to dabble in the Imperial politics of India and acknowledged the Marathas as the protectors of the Indian Empire. Thus the victor of Panipat himself confessed the political futility of his victory and of the ambition that led to the battle and acknowledged the Hindus to be the paramount power of Hindustan. Having thus eliminated the Afghan element from the Imperial politics of India and taken possession of Delhi, the Marathas completely isolated the Pathans and the Rohillas who were about the only two really powerful Muhammadan centres in India that still would have, if they could, contested the Imperial power at the hands of the Hindus. But their day of reckoning had come. The memory of the outrages and indignities the Rohillas and Pathans had inflicted on the Marathas at Panipat had set on edge the steel of the Maratha vengeance and roused the forces of retribution that could perhaps be crushed, but never coaxed. This the Pathans knew as well as the Rohillas. They, under their old leaders, Hafiz Rahimat and Ahmedkhan Bangash, both of whom had seen Panipat, joined hands and determined to present a bold front to the Maratha hosts as they came.

Halting for a while at Delhi the Marathas entered the Doab. They found that the forces of their old enemies growing menacingly great. Some 70000 Moslems were in arms. But the Marathas did not wait to count them. Field after field was furiously fought. But field after field the Pathans and Rohillas got mercilessly hewn down. Wresting fort after fort and town after town from the hands of their foes and sweeping the whole Doab clean of Pathan resistance, the advancing army of Maharashtra invaded Rohilkhand and crushed the Rohillas as mercilessly as they had done the Pathans. Death had shielded Nazibkhan from their vengeance, but his son Zabetakhan still lived to pay for the sins of his father and his own. He had taken shelter behind the walls of the impregnable fortress of Shukratal. The Marathas marched straight against the fort, opened a furious bombardment against it and inflicted such a terrible loss on the contingent inside that Zabetakhan could no longer hold it against them. One night he fled away and crossing the Ganges entered Bijnoor. Crossing the Ganges quick, the avenging army of the Marathas too forthwith marched towards Bijnoor in the very teeth of the fearful fire that the Moslem batteries, kept by Zabetakhan to guard the gates, opened on them. They carried the batteries, they routed the two powerful armies that contested their way they put thousands of the Rohillas to the sword and entered Bijnoor. The whole district lay trampled

under the hoof of their horse. Zabetakhan fled to Nazibgad. The Marathas pursued him there and took Futtehgad. Here to their boundless delight the immense booty, that Nazibkhan and his Rohillas had carried away from the Maratha camp at Panipat, fell back in the hands of the victorious Marathas. Their triumph was complete. Even the wife and children of Zabetakhan were captured by them. The cruel and brutal fate that had met the few Maratha women and hundreds of youths at Panipat at the hands of those very fierce Rohillas would have justified the Marathas in dealing out vengeance in terribly equal measures to the family of Nazib and Zabeta now, but true to the tradition of the Hindu triumph the Maratha vengeance did neither contemplate their forcible conversion, nor their victimization to the brutal passions of the camp bazaars. The Hindu arms, even without resorting to these barbarous and brutal acts, had struck such terror in the hearts of the Rohillas and Pathans all over the land, that the very sight of a Maratha trooper was enough to make a whole village of Rohilla Moslems take to their heels. Those of their leaders who survived, fled away to the interior of the forests of Terai. There too it was only the setting in of the rainy season alone that shielded them from the steel of the Maratha vengeance. So terribly had they to pay for Panipat.

Having thus carried their colours to the very borders of the forests of Terai and cowed down all their

foes, the return march was sounded and the armies of Maharashtra marched back towards Delhi in 1771 A.D. There their diplomats had already reaped the fruits of the victories of their generals and outwitting and frustrating the designs of the English and Suja to secure the person of Shah-alum, the Mogul claimant to the throne, and thus assume the position of the paramount power in India, had forced Shah-alum to resign to the Marathas all rights and responsibilt-ties of conducting and defending the Indian Empire in return for nominal recognition of him as the Empiror of India. Even this nominal recognition he would not get till he agreed to pay back all accumulated arrears since the day of Panipat and Chowth to the Marathas and consented to divide equally any new acquisition of territory. Once what was nearly done in 1761, was fully done in 1771 A. D. After the crushing defeat of the Rohillas and Pathans there remained no Moslem throughout India who could contest the sovereignty of the Hindus in Hindustan. That year really marked the end of Muhammadan independence and power and ambition. The Moguls, Turks, Afghans, Pathans, Rohillas, and Persians, Northern and Southern, all sections and sects of the Moslems, strove to contest and seize the Imperial power of India and rescue their Empire from falling into the hands of the avenging forces of Hindudom. But the Marathas made all their endeavours come to naught, held the Imperial power

of India as the protectors of the Indian Empire for over 50 years against all who came to contest or challenge it. After 1771 we may dismiss the Moslems as a power in the political field of India. The Hindus had finished them and had recovered thus Hindustan and the independence of their Hindu race from Attock to the seas. The only claimant against whom they had thenceforth to struggle and strive was not the Moslem: but one far different in nature and character and calibre from the Mussalman. It was the Englishman.

It would have been strange if the drafting away of these two great armies from the Maratha camp to the north had not induced the redoubtable Haidar to try his luck again, and challenge the Maratha supremacy in the south. Madhao Rao immediately crossed the Tungabhadra and, at the head of a powerful army, went on capturing fort after fort and giving battle after battle to the foes. A second army was posted to harass Haidar when he entered the woods of Anavadi. One night while it was lying encamped near Mattoo, Haidar, with a picked force of some 20 thousand men came out of the woods and, supple as a tiger, fell upon the unsuspecting Maratha forces. But fortunately the very first boom of Haidar's gun roused Gopalrao, the commander of the Marathas. He instantly sensed the danger, knew that whole Maratha army would be cut off before it woke if the slightest hesitation or weakness was shown. He

jumped on his horse, unfurled his national colours and, taking his position, ordered the war-drums to sound the alarm: at the terrible sound soldiers after soldiers started up and rushed from his camp-bed to the battlefield. The terrible fire of the foe thickened. Trooper after trooper was hit down. But the Marathas wavered not. The thunder of Haidar's guns and the fury of his bombardment threatened to round the Marathas off: but Gopalrao stood immovable, intrepid—his colours flying defiance. The war-drum still sounded the alarm. His aide-camp was standing by. A cannon ball burst and smashed off his head to pieces. A column of blood spouted up so forcibly that it fell in shower all round and drenched the Maratha commander in a gory bath. Still Parashram Bhau stood his ground on his horse. A bullet struck down his horse—he mounted a second. No sooner had he mounted it than that too was hit by a bursting shell : the general was unhorsed again. But again he mounted a third charger and kept his post in the very jaws of death. Unshaken, intrepid, a slight tremor of a nerve, an inch of the ground lost would have meant a panic and the whole army fallen in the hands of an exultant foe. But the commander's courage grew contagious and the whole army of the Marathas, men and officers, bore the fire fronting it as an iron wall. Haidar, as he came near, stood awed at the sight of this indomitable fortitude and, dismayed, wheeled back suddenly as he had come out. The cam-

paign continued. Pethe, Patwardhan, Panse and other Maratha generals gave a ceaseless chase and pursued Haidar from field to field and at Motitalad caught him so completely in their clutches that his whole army was cut to pieces and all his camp with arms and ammunition fell in the hands of the victorious Marathas. Now the Marathas meant to remove Haidar altogether from the political field, but just then a letter reached their camp from Poona, commanding them to end the campaign and return to the capital as the Peshwa was lying seriously ill. Grudgingly the Maratha generals drew up a treaty and got it signed, by which Haidar had to cede all the territories that comprised Maratha "Swaraj" and pay 50 lakhs of rupees as his tribute to the Peshwa besides all expenses of war.

Amidst such glorious events the news of the illness of their leader, under whose capable guidance the Marathas had avenged the wrongs done to them at Panipat and restored their nation to the height of her past greatness, reached the different Maratha camps and capitals from Delhi to Mysore and affected the whole people as a great national calamity. It was not only his martial qualities and achievements that rendered Madhao Rao so popular amongst his people. His civil administration, too, was as just and equitable, his concern for the welfare of his subjects, princes and peasants alike, was as deep and sincere, his efforts to see justice done

to the high and low alike were so strenuous and watchful that his subjects even to the meanest came to bear a personal love and devotion to him. The powerful feared his probity and strictness. The peasant and the poor confided in him and knew him to be their beloved protector. In spite of domestic troubles and ruinous civil wars caused by the ambitions of his silly uncle, he, within ten years of Panipat, made his nation forget it or rather remember it as a battle that was nobly lost, and yet won and struck down with his mighty hand all those who raised their hands against the cause of Hindu independence and Hindu-pad-padashahi. While he was yet but in the flower of his youth, he was at the height of his popularity and fortune and his nation was expecting at his hands things even more glorious than the achievements of his great father. Madhao Rao fell a prey to consumption when he was only 27 or so. While he lay seriously ill in his palace he tried to please and placate his incorrigible uncle who even then was conspiring with the Nizam, managed to pay off all his public debts, and ordered his royal physician to administer to him such phials as would leave his power of speech unaffected even unto his last moment, so that it might enable him to die with the Lord's praises on his lips. As the news of the serious illness of the Peshwa spread abroad from all sides of his realm, his devoted people poured into Poona to have a last look of their national hero and

national and beloved father. He thereupon ordered that the gates of his palace be closed to none and that the meanest of his subjects be not prevented from seeing him. On the 8th of Kartika (1772 A. D.) the noble prince summoned the learned and the pious to his presence. Bowing low to them all and in front of those who kept thronging round his palace as they would round a temple, the prince asked for their leave: "We depart" said he: "bound for the last great pilgrimage, we depart: bid ye all a kind farewell unto me." Then repeating the name of the Lord, the young prince, like a great yogin, yielded his last breath amidst the sighs and sobs of a whole people with the Lord's name *Gajanan, Gajanan* lingering on his lips. His young, childless and devoted wife, Ramabai, gave away her jewels and other valuables to the pious and the poor and discarding the persuasions and the pressure of her royal relations, mounted the funeral pile of her lover. Immolating herself in the leaping flames she lighted the torch of her soul to illumine the secrets of the deathless love and the divine beauty that could yet be attained by man. Down to this day Maharashtra offers her loyal and loving tribute of tears at the mention of these her prince and her princess-Madhao Rao and Ramabai. Down to this day the national bards bewail—'fled is the light of our life and lost the jewel of our heart.'

CHAPTER XVIII

CIVIL WAR AND POPULAR REVOLUTION

"इंग्रजांनां खडे चारिले नाहीं लागुं दिला थारा
भले बुध्दिचे सागर नाना ऐसा नाहिं होणारा"

THAT a Madhao Rao, the hope of a whole people, should die young, while Raghoba, the curse of a whole people, should survive a generation after him, is one of those events that make men doubt at times if Good be really omnipotent as it is said to be.

The death of Madhao Rao was a great national calamity, but the survival of Raghoba was calamity even greater than that. No sooner was the childless Madhao Rao succeeded, in accordance with his wish and the nation's will, by his younger brother Narayan Rao, than did Raghoba begin anew to hatch up bloody conspiracies against the young boy and those who supported him. He took the hired guard of the palace in his confidence and ordered them to surround and arrest the young Peshwa, which plan his demoniacal wife, Anandibai, replaced by inciting them to assasinate him altogether. On the 30th of August 1773 the guards suddenly rose in mutiny and confronted Narayan Rao, clamouring insolently for pay. As soon as one of the faithful attendants of the Peshwa remonstrated with them, they drew their swords and killed him there and then. Alarmed, the young Peshwa hastened away from room to room, hotly

pursued by the mutineers, till he reached Raghoba's hall and throwing his arms round his waist piteously prayed that his life be spared. "Save, uncle, save me, thy child: I will recognise thee as my Peshwa and will ask no more than a few crumbs of bread for my maintenance." But the assassins were upon them. Raghoba disentangled himself from his clasp and the murderers fell upon the youth. Chaphaji Tileker threw himself between the swords of the assasins and his master, and covering the body of Narayan Rao entreated the guards to spare their master. But murder was on them and the guards dealt strokes after strokes with their bloody swords and slew the young Peshwa along with the faithful Chaphaji, who lay covering him unto death. Thereupon the mutineers proclaimed Raghoba as the Peshwa of Maharashtra and took possession of the palace.

The news, as it spread through the capital, inflamed the citizens who, gathering in groups, swore not to recognise the murderous Raghoba as their chief. Enough of national spirit was still left in Maharashtra and a horrible palace intrigue was not likely to cow them down into obedience to a chief that they did not tacitly choose. The leaders and the prominent officers of the state formed themselves into a secret revolutionary committee, and Ramshastri, the Chief Justice of the Realm, was called upon to carry an investigation into the crime, who soon got convinced of the complicity of Raghoba and Anandibai—his evil

genius—in the dastardly murder. Thereupon the dauntless Brahman repaired to the palace and, entering the hall where Raghoba sat as Peshwa guarded by his partisans, charged him straight to his face as the murderer of his nephew and of the Peshwa of the people. The question of purificatory rites being raised, he exclaimed, " What purification can there be for such a dastardly crime as this? The only expiatory rite that is prescribed is death by instant execution." Being warned by some one, he retorted: "I fear no Raghoha. I have done my duty as the Chief Justice of my people. If he likes, let him add to his crime by murdering me, too. I will neither reside nor take food in a city where such a criminal reigns." Before the awed partisans of Raghoba could fully realise it all, the indomitable Brahman, burning with pious rage like a flame of fire, was off—-out of the palace—out of the city—nor touched food nor drink, till he reached the banks of the sacred Krishna river.

Just then it was ascertained that Gangabai, the young widow-princess, was pregnant and an issue to Narayan Rao, the deceased Peshwa, was expected. This news stregthened the hands of the revolutionary committee as nothing else could have done. Morobadada, Krishnarao Kale, Haripant Phadke, Trimbakrao Mama, Raste—the chief of the artillery, Patwardhans, Dhaygude, Naro Appaji and several other leading citizens and officers of the realm, led by two most prominent statesmen, Nana Fadanis and

Sakharam Bhau, decided first to take Raghoba out on an expedition and then to break out in open revolt against him. They soon suceeded in forcing Raghoba to undertake an expedition in the south. No sooner did he turn his back on Maharashtra, than they rose in Poona, took possession of the capital and proclaimed Gangabai as the Head of the administration of the Realm and the expectant mother of the future Peshwa. The popular revolution soon spread out from the capital to the country. Fort after fort and town after town acknowledged the authority of the new Government, which to all practical purposes became a republic and came to be known as "the Barbhai's administration," or the republican rule. When the startling news of this national outbreak reached Raghoba, his first thought was to march on Poona with the forces under his command, but finding the revolutionary army already coming upon him, he, along with the few who still clung to him, and his hired forces turned towards the north looting and devastating the people and the country on his march, as though he was passing through an alien land at war. He still hoped that, if Ganagaba failed to give birth to a son, then a popular reaction would soon set in his favour. At Koregaon he even gave a battle and defeating the revolutionary forces slew their chief Trimbak Rao Mama Pethe. This was a heavy loss to the revolution; for Pethe was one of their staunchest leaders. Still Nana and

Bapu held out and backed up by the bulk of the Maratha nation continued the struggle unabated.

Now the eyes of all Maharashtra, nay, all India, centred on Purandar, where the young Maratha princess Gangabai was kept, under the strictest and the most solicitous watch and ward. She was fast approaching the critical time. As day followed day, and no news from Purandar came, the popular anxiety grew tense. Crowded congregations sent forth moving prayers from temples and tirthas that their young princess at Purander be blessed with a son and a male heir, so that the wild ambitions of the hated Raghoba be utterly frustrated. From the public squares to the princely halls, all India stood on the tiptoe of expectation and the royal courts at Delhi, Indore, Gwalior, Baroda, Hyderabad, Mysore, Calcutta and several other centres of Indian politics waited for news from Purandar with breathless curiosity. At last on the 18th April 1774 the longed-for news arrived. Gangabai, the Maratha princess at Purandar delivered of a male heir. All Maharashtra hailed the birth and recognised him as their national head and the destined first minister of their realm. Even foreign courts, carried away by the general public enthusiasm, showered congratulations on the infant prince. The relief felt by the revolutionaries all over Maharashtra and the patriotic hopes and aspirations could best be seen in the temporary correspondence and records. Sabaji Bhosle

writes from his camp: "As soon as the news reached us here it conveyed a world of joy: God has heard our prayers: the camp is all aglee: martial music is playing. The guns are booming forth royal salutes. May the Lord bless our beloved Peshwa with long life:" The news caused equally great rejoicings in the revolutionary forces wherever they were. "Haripant Tatya, our general, immediately ordered great celebrations throughout the army. Martial music and bands and peals of cannon could hardly give vent to the public joy. Sugar was distributed from the howdas on elephants to celebrate the auspicious ceremony." "Doubtless God is on our side. For the welfare and protection of our people and for the propagation of our Faith, the Lord has blest our cause. Long Live the infant Peshwa! Long live the darling of our people!"

The child was named Madhao Rao which name a people fondly devoted to the princely lad soon replaced by "Savai Madhao Rao" or Madhao Rao the Greater. His birth changed the political prospect of all India by strengthening the hands of the revolutionists in Poona who now all the more boldly and vigorously declared Raghoba an outlaw and ordered all Maratha sardars to chase and arrest him wherever found. It enabled the party of those statesmen and patriots who were brought up in the tradition of Hindu-pad-padashahi under Nanasaheb and Bhau and who had the vision and the ability to maintain the exalted

position Maharashtra had attained, as the great paramount, Hindu power in India, to hold the reins of the realm in their hands and keep their nation true to its mission for a longer time than it would otherwise have been, had that man, who could hardly manage his wife, come to manage the Maratha Empire. But the mere news of the birth of a son unto Narayan Rao and the great enthusiasm and wild national rejoicing with which all Maharashtra hailed the birth and lovingly recognised the princely infant as the chosen prime-minister of their Empire, could not exercise that man of the devilish ambition that had possessed him. For Raghoba, like a frightened bull, ran his wild career all the more madly, the more hotly pursued he was by his ill-luck and the victorious arms of the revolution. At last defeated and deserted by his own people he did not hesitate to seek the shelter of the worst enemies of his nation.

Of all the nations and states that were still cherishing an ambition to wield the imperial power in India at the time under review, there was none who could have challenged the paramount position that the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra while it stood united in itself. All those who tried to do so were either utterly crushed or thrown into the back ground to keep chafing there with impotent rage, held tightly in subordination. The Muhammadans, whether Pathans or Persians, Moguls or Turks, whether from beyond the Indus or Indian—the Muhammadans were so

completely crushed as a power as never again to raise their head against the Hindu Empire. They had ceased to be a factor in the political sphere of India. Of the other combatants, the Portuguese power that once dominated half Asia reeled and fell, never to recover again under the heavy blows dealt out by the Marathas by land and by sea in the war they waged for the liberation of Konkan. The French, too though they never dared to strike against the Marathas face to face, had often attempted to dominate Poona through Hyderabad and Arcot, but were as often frustrated in their aims, and partially owing to that and partially as a result of their European conflicts, had so far ceased to be a danger to the Hindu Empire as to render their existence relatively desirable for a while to it as it served the useful purpose of letting it be played as a power to countercheck the ambitious impudence of their English rivals. The English. too, ever since the days of Shivaji, knew well that if they existed on the Western coast it was not so much because they were desired there or their political aims and ambition had escaped the scrutiny of the Maratha statesmen, but simply because the Marathas had to fight far more powerful and pressing foes elsewhere and so tolerated them as a relatively lesser danger that could be more conveniently dealt with later on, or could be more easily crushed if it ever became imminent. The English too gifted with an acute political insight knew very

well that they held Bombay on the western coast, not so much in the teeth of the Maratha opposition as in virtue of their serious preoccupation elsewhere and their resultant toleration. So they too, though ever willing to wound, where always afraid to strike. Nanasaheb had utilised them in destroying the power of the Angre, but this he did on conditions that were, had his reasonable expectations come out true, far from being harmful to the Maratha power as a whole, whether military or naval. Had not things taken a sudden turn which no one of his generation could have expected as more likely to happen than not, the destruction of the Angre's centripetal tendencies would have actually contributed to the strength of the naval power of the Marathas as a state, by concentrating the divided, and therefore weakened, command of their navy in the hands of the central power. England, in spite of this transaction, derived no very important accessions to their actual possessions so far as the western coast was concerned. These possessions remained confined to the original magnitude ever since the days of Shivaji. But in Bengal, England found a veritable "Open sesame," and Clive literally awoke to find himself a victor of a field that was fought while he was asleep, and master of opportunities that could have, but for the Marathas, carried him straight to Delhi even then. But thereby we do not mean that the successes of the English in Bengal were anyway undeserved.

The very fact that a people could utilize their success, however accidental or thrust upon them by the cowardice or incapacity of their opponents more than their own prowess, proves that they deserved their luck. The successes the English won against the French in Madras were really due to their pluck. Thus both their luck and their pluck enabled the English to grow into a power in Bengal and in Madras, without so seriously and directly challenging the supremacy of the Marathas as to provoke their immediate hostilities. But in spite of this, even this surreptitious growth of the English power in Bengal and Madras had in no wise escaped the acute vision of the Maratha leaders. Nanasaheb and Bapu were too seasoned, watchful and foresighted as statesmen to allow any of the opponents of the Hindu Empire, however insignificant their actual power be, to steal a march over them. It was this sudden accession of the English power in Bengal that was one of the causes which made Bhau mark out Bengal in the comprehensive programme of conquest he drafted for 1760-61 A.D. as a special objective and direct two powerful Maratha armies to liberate the whole province from the yoke of the non-Hindu powers under which it groaned ever since the days of Laxmansing, our last Hindu king of Bengal. The northern division of the Maratha forces had actually started on the expedition under Dattaji Shinde in 1760. But as already described

the invasion of Ahmedshah forced the Marathas to postpone the question of Bengal and face that mighty foe first. Then came Panipat, followed by the death of Nanasaheb. These calamities overtaking the Marathas in rapid succession afforded a new lease of life to the English which they most tactfully and assiduously utilized to strengthen their position in Bengal and Madras and prepare themselves with a set purpose of dominating the imperial affairs of Delhi, by wresting the leading string of the Indian Empire out of the hands of the Marathas as soon as an opportunity presented itself. But that opportunity they could not find as yet, and Panipat or no Panipat they dared not to contest openly the united strength of the Marathas, which still continued to be the sovereign political power in Hindustan. The little line of red colour that dotted Calcutta on the map of India swelled and coloured half Bengal red. The little drop of red that coloured Madras on the map of India suddenly overflowed and submerged half that Presidency. But the little line of red that marked out Bombay as British in the days of Shivaji remaind the little line it had been even to the days of Nana Fadanis. Not an inch of ground could it bring under its influence on the western coast, even when whole presidencies got tinged in red elsewhere on the map of India. For here on the peaks of Sahyadri the Maratha sentinel stood on guard balancing his fiercely pointed lance ready to pierce fatally the first

alien who dared to step ahead. So none of the Non-Hindu people, whether European or Asiatic, whether Christian or Muhammadan were in a position to venture to contest or question the supremacy of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra as the sovereign political power of India while it stood solid and undivided in itself.

For though it is true that as a nation to a nation the English were doubtlessly better fitted than the Marathas in those national qualities which make a people subordinate and sacrifice their individual ambition and interests to their national aims and instinctively feel a religious repugnance at the thought of betraying their civil and communal interests or of selling their national freedom for a mess of pottage; yet, even then, we must guard ourselves against the falacious tendency to read the past entirely in the borrowed light of the present. Every one is wise after the event. But if we take into consideration only those facts and factors which could be reasonably known or foreseen then, the relative forces, whether civil, military, or political, ranged on both sides, it would have required only a prophet to foretell exactly who were destined to win amongst the two rivals. No politician could have precisely fortold it. The scientific or constitutional progress that England recorded then was not so hopelessly in advance of the Maratha activities as to disable them permanently in the political race for the imperial crown of India. Moreover, there

were natural and immense disadvantages on the English side in as much as they had to fight on an alien ground, thousands of miles away from their chief base of operation, and their mother country. Japan, who began to gird up her loins a century, later could make up the immense distance that separated her from her European rivals in science and constitutional experience within half a century or so. The Marathas too, other things equal, could also have done that, especially as in the time under review the English were not so much in advance of the Marathas even in those spheres as to mark them out as pre-eminently destined to oust the Marathas from the paramount position they held as the *de facto* Imperial power in India in the teeth of the armed and simultaneous opposition of the Moguls and the Afghans and the Persians, of the French and the Portuguese and the English themselves.

The English themselves knew it well and so they never directly challenged the Maratha power while it stood united and free from serious civil discords. But even when broken into factions and at war with themselves, none but the English possessed that vision and capacity to dare to provoke hostilities and invite opposition with some chance of success. Pampered on the spoil of Bengal and Madras, they had now grown fat enough to venture to kick against the Marathas in Bombay as soon as they found them involved in a serious civil end. Even Raghoba could see that

and so when defeated, deserted and driven by his own countrymen, he took it into his head, giddy with the mad ambition of ruling Maharashtra against the will of the people, to seek the shelter of the English and promise to sell the freedom of his nation to its worst foes and let them in through the breach which his fratricidal hands effected in the ramparts of the Marathe Empire. The English eagerly grasped that fratricidal hand and on condition of receiving a territory yielding 20 to 25 lakhs of rupees of revenue, Salsette and Bassein and Bhadoch, undertook to reinstate Raghoba as Peshwa of the Maratha people. Immediately the English forces with Raghoba opened hostlities against the Marathas and invaded their territory. The news that war had broken out between the English and the Marathas encouraged all the disaffected princes and principalities to rise revolt against the Marathas all over India. But Nana Fadanis, who had by this time concentrated into his hands the supreme power of the revolutionary Government, stood four square against all the adverse winds that blew. In spite of the extremely disorganised state of the newly born Government at Poona, Nana gathered whatever forces he could and despatched them under Haripant Phadke to check and harass the advance of the English forces under Col. Keating. This task Haripant and his men performed well. At Napar and some other places they inflicted severe losses on the foe, though he kept bravely sustaining

them all. Just then in 1777 A. D. there came about a change in the constitution of the English Government in India by which the Governor of Calcutta was vested with supreme power over all their possessions in virtue of which he disowned the war with the Marathas undertaken by the Governor of Bombay and sent an envoy to Poona to negotiate a treaty with the Maratha Government. Nana very anxious to get breathing time to quell the risings and revolts that had taken place all over India against the Marathas, signed a treaty, by which the English undertook to surrender Raghoba and were to receive Salsette and Bhadoch.

No sooner did the English hostilities end than Nana sent Mahadaji Shinde to quell all internal disturbances and ordered Phadke and Patwardhan to chastise Haidar for his invasion into the Maratha territories.

But while those Maratha generals were away on their several missions, the English refused to surrender Raghoba as agreed by the treaty and once more resumed hostilities with a view to crush Nana before his armies could return to Poona to strengthen his hands. To overawe the Marathas they undertook, under Col. Egerton, a daring march against Poona itself in 1779. The Marathas, too, having never liked the treaty of Purander and being now relatively free from internal disturbances which Mahadaji had ably quelled, challenged the English to do

their worst and, resorting to their traditional tactics of guerilla warfare, lured the English further and further, taking good care to cut off their communication with Bombay. Bhivrao Panse kept hanging about the skirts of the advancing English, forced so persistently, yet so elusively, that the English general could neither thrust a battle on the Marathas nor avoid one when thrust by them on his forces whenever they found him tightly cornered. His parties were constantly cut off; his supplies were interrupted; and at last as he came to the top of the passes, his line of communication with Bombay was utterly broken. Still undaunted he marched on. The determination of the Marathas too grew in intensity and bitterness as the foe approached their capital. They decided to desert and desolate the whole territory from Talegaon to Poona and, if need be, to burn down their beloved capital to ashes than surrender it to the hated foes. This grim national resolve could not fail to impress even the English forces. At Khandalla, Col. Cay was mortally wounded by the Marathas. At Kirkee, another important officer, Captain Stewart was hit down to the great grief of the English At every step the English losses grew severe. But admirably disciplined, they still advanced and entered Talegaon, but only to find themselves, confronted by a powerful army led by Mahadaji Shinde and Haripant Phadke. The English boldly attacked them, but to their surprise found that the Maratha army suddenly

withdrew, got itself divided, and spreading out kept charging the English on all sides and yet from a safe distance. Neither food nor fodder could be had for miles around and reliable rumours reached the English camp assuring them that the further they advanced the more thoroughly desolated a tract they would have to pass through. Seasoned, brave and haughty, even then the English attempted to march on. But the wily Marathas had well nigh surrounded them and deliberately informed them of the grim determination of their people to rather burn the capital down than surrender it to their foes. The commander of the English forces had seen enough of the Marathas to cure him of his infatuation and get convinced that the march towards Poona was not a march towards Plassey. There was only one way to get out of the fix to march back to Bombay. Disgraceful thought it was that there was no other go. Even a march back was imposible if openly resumed. So the English commander determined to take the Marathas by surprise and ordered a stealthy march back. But to take the Marathas by surprise was like teaching grandma to suck. They had known it all and as soon as the English came out they closed their ranks and at a sign fell on their foe with irresistable might. The English fought with their traditional stubbornness, but the Marathas could not be shaken off. At last, beaten and broken at Vadgaon, the whole, army numbering some nine thousand men, surrendered un

conditionally to the Marathas. Nana and Bapu and Shinde demanded that Raghoba be immediately handed over to them and all the Maratha districts that the English had squeezed by the treaty of Purander should forthwith he returned. Moreover two English officers were taken as hostage to stand security for the carrying out of the terms of the treaty. The English commander accepted all the terms as a price for being allowed to take back his army to Bombay after remaining captives in the hands of the victorious Marathas for more than a month. The news of the splendid victory sent a thrill of joy throughout the nation. The Union Jack, so stiff, had bowed low to the orange and gold of Maharashtra. In spite of civil feuds and the disorganised state into which their country and people had consequently fallen, their nation had risen equal to the occasion and the people's Government had inflicted so indisputable a defeat on such an audatious and stubborn a foe. Even the one remaining adversary, who of all had not yet dared to strike or question the supremacy of the power of Maharashtra in India, had to confess to humiliation as soon as he ventured to do so. "Our nation," to quote the contemporary correspondence, 'had taught such a lesson to the English as none else could teach them. Never had they been so thoroughly humiliated." The people fondly devoted to their infant Peshwa, who had been the centre of the popular cause, lovingly attributed their victories to the luck

of that princely lad. "Even from his very birth, the life of our beloved Bal Peshwa, our dear infant prince, had as miraculous a career as that of the divine child of Gokul. Our enemies stand vanquished and God has blessed the cause of our nation and of our Hindu Faith in this Holy war."

CHAPTER XX

THE ENGLISH HUMBLED

"प्रतापमहिमा थोरजळामधिपंरि जळचरबु अविला" ॥
"नवी मोहिम दरसाळ देउनी शाहाटिपूतु अविल"

As soon as the news of the capitulation of a great English army reached Calcutta, the English were so wild with rage as to make them utterly unscrupulous and refusing to sanction the treaty their commander had, at Vadgaon, signed, after the captured army had been allowed to pass back to Bombay by the Marathas according to that treaty, they renewed hostilities with added zeal. In the meanwhile Raghoba, too, who would have in other states, been shot for high treason on betrayal, was so leniently treated as a prince would have been, abused that liberty and once more effected his escape and went over to the English camp. Then the war again grew furious. Goddard descended from Gujarat and marched on Bassein. He was opposed by Ramchandra Ganesh who contested the English advance with admirable pertina-

city, fighting action after action against the foe whenever and wherever he could. He led his last assault with such magnificent courage and valour as to win admiration even from his foes. But unfortunately this gallant and skilled Maratha general, struck by a bullet, fell in the very thick of the fight and Goddard took Bassein in 1780 A. D. Encouraged by this success, the English thought of wiping out the stain that the surrender of their army at Vadgaon had left on their arms by accomplishing the task of carrying the very capital of the Marathas which they had formerly so disgracefully failed to do. So the English advanced against Poona, aiming to browbeat Nana and his associates into surrender. But the matchless genius of that Maratha statesman had already woven a subtly dangerous net into which he threatened to entangle the English power all over India. He made Haidar promise to attack Madras, Bhosle to invade Bengal and undertook himself to crush the English power at Bombay. Accordingly Haidar, with the aid of the French Government, achieved a signal success at Madras. Parashram Bhau with 12 thousand men kept hanging around and harassing the flanks and the rear of the advance of the English forces towards Poona. While Nana, Tukoji Holkar, and Haripant Phadke faced the the English with 30 thousand Maratha forces. General Goddard found himself, as he advanced, in the same predicament as Col. Egarton did. He could not

advance further unless he invited the fate of his predecessor and yet he had advanced far enough to render a march back as dangerous as it would be disgraceful. So standing where he was he strengthened himself. But that too could not continue long. The vigorous and most harassing attacks the Maratha delivered against Captain Mackay and Col. Brown while striving to carry supplies to Goddard, made any further attempt to maintain communication with Bombay extremely risky and ruinous. At last even General Goddard, to his utter chagrin, had to decide to drop the advance against the capital of the Marathas, and retire. As soon as the the crestfallen English army took a right about turn and began a march back the Marathas led by Bhau and Tukoji Holkar closed upon the prey from all sides and in spite of the stubborn discipline and bravery of the English beat them so badly as to make their boastful commander, whose arrogance aspired to crown him with the honours of triumphant entry into the Maratha capital, thank his stars for having somehow been able to reach back Bombay alive, even though at the cost of leaving hundreds of his soldiers slain and strewn, marking the track of his return march with their corpses and almost all ammunition, guns, tents, and camp furniture, thousands of cannon shots, and stores, thousands of bullocks abandoned and fallen in the hands of the triumphant Marathas. Thus twicedid the English come audaciously forward to fight their way on to Poona

and twice had they to face the utter humiliation of retiring beaten and crest-fallen back to Bombay. Never did a boastful going out end in a more sadly disgraceful return home.

Nor did the English forces fare much better in the north. In spite of some initial success which they, with the help of the Rana of Gohad who had taken their side against the Marathas and the capture of the fort of Gwalior, the English under Colonel Carac failed to achieve anything so substantial as to enable them to hold long against the most harassing attacks of Mahadaji Shindia. Colonel Muir, too, who hastened to succour his comrade out of the fix, failed to improve their position. Thus foiled in the south by Haidar, on the Bombay side by Tukoji Holkar and Patwardhan and in the north by Mahadaji Shindia, the English tried to break up the chain of alliances that the genius of Nana Fadnis had woven round them by making overtures to Mahadaji Shindia requesting him to influence his Government, to sign a separate peace with the English. But Nana would have nothing to do with the separate peace and refused to enter into any negotiations without consulting Haidar. The Maratha navy too gave a good account of itself. Anandrao Dhulap, their admiral, in a daring attack won a signal victory and captured an English man-of-war named *Ranger* and carried it a away, a prize. But just then Haidar died, even while the negotiations were going on. So Nana signed the peace in 1783;

by which the English had to deliver up Raghoba, who was the chief bone of contention, into the hands of the Marathas, surrender all territories they had taken in the war or received by the treaty of Purander except Salsette, and undertake not to help or encourage any Asiatic nation or state at war or inimically disposed towards the Marathas who too promised not to have political dealings with any European rivals against the interests of the English. Above all the English had to engage not to dabble with the Imperial politics of India at Delhi and acknowledge the right of the Marathas to direct and control them as freely as they chose.

Thus ended the first Anglo-Maratha war. Thus did Maharashtra vindicate their claim and position on the battlefield as the premier and paramount political power of India by discomfitting and defeating, amongst the rest, the only European power that had not till then ventured, and challenged the Marathas to challenge to an open combat. They taught England a bitter lesson that, inspite of the accession to their strength and possession in Bengal and Madras, the English would only get their head smashed if they dared to defy the Sahyadrian ramparts of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra with the same insolence that served them so well against and in overawing the effeminate Muhammadan Nabobs of Bengal and Arcot.

Soon after the treaty of Salbai was signed, Raghoba too had to end his ignominous career of intriguing

against his own nation and betraying the interests of his country and selling them to the worst enemy of his race. He had by his foul ambition been the cause of diverting the energies of the Maratha Confederacy into the barren channels and poisonous and fatal bogs of civil war, from the ennobling pursuit of fulfilling the great mission that generations of Maharashtra had worked for and died for. His life was at least as great a national disaster as the battle of Panipat had been. Fortunately that life did not continue long after the treaty of Salbai. Yet it did neither end without calling into existence another life that was to be even a greater curse to the Maratha people. Even while Raghoba was being utterly foiled in his foul intrigue, with England, a son was born to him who, as irony would have it, was named Baji Rao the Second, after his illustrious grandfather Balaji Rao I, and who was destined to fulfil the satanic mission which his father was forced to abandon and succeed in doing what his parents failed to do and selling the Independence of Maharashtra for a mess of pottage and encompass the ruin of the last great Hindu Empire.

But that was not yet to be, not at any rate till Nana and Mahadaji lived.

CHAPTER XX

SAVAI MADHAO RAO—THE PESHWA OF THE PEOPLE'S A CHOICE

दैन्य दिवस आजसरलें सर्वांइं माधवराव प्रतापी कीलियुग
अवतरंले ॥
सुंदररूप रायाचें कणावर नाहिं रागें भरणें ॥
कलागितुरा शिरपचं पाचुचीं पडत होति किरणें ॥
महोत्साह घरोघरं लागले लोक करायाला ॥
परशराम प्रत्यक्ष आले जणुं छत्र धरायाला ॥

FOR Nana and Mahadaji, the brain and the sword of Hindudom, meant on their atlantean shoulders to bear the weight of the mightest of monarchies. Of all the best of statesmen and swordsmen, of Hastings and Wellesley and Cornwallis, that England or France or Holland or Portugal sent out to India to conquer an empire, none could outwit or oppose these with any great measure of success. Both of them had seen the palmiest days of the Hindu Empire. Both were trained in the principles and aims and traditions of their nation and its mission in the imperial school of the great Nanasaheb and Sadashivrao Bhau. Both had seen Panipat and survived it, determined to carry on the mission of the heroic generation that lay slain on that gory field. They found their kingdom smitten by the civil war, on the verge of ruin, with a nonentity for its king, a lad for its prime minister and an ambi-

tious and powerful European foe for its sworn antagonist. Yet they faced all odds with dauntless courage and an undimmed vision, quelled revolts and rebellions within the realm, and with a mighty hand and unerring eye threw down and forced their foes, whether European or Asiatic, to drink the cup of humiliation.

They had taken upon themselves the risky responsibilities of calling into existence and controlling the uncertain and fitful moods of a popular revolution. Now that the revolution had triumphed over all its enemies and its Government, based on the firm foundation of national will, had proved invincible in the field, it was as natural as politically imperative that the achievement be signalised by some imposing celebration. The marriage ceremony of the young Peshwa, Savai Madhao Rao furnished the fittest occasion for national rejoicings. He was the Peshwa of the people's choice. It was for him that the nation went to war. Now that their beloved young prince had survived not only open wars, but even clandestine, cowardly and criminal efforts of their enemies to poison, assasinate and murder him, the nation could not refrain their imagination from comparing the miraculous vicissitudes of his life with those of the divine Child of Gokul and longed to see their princely darling grow to a happy boyhood. People from far and near flocked to Poona to join in the royal celebration. Princes, chiefs, flourishing poets,

famous authors, great generals, veterans that had seen service at Udgir and Attock, diplomats and statesmen, all flocked to Poona to celebrate the marriage and have a look at their beloved and august prince. To impress the world with the solidarity of the confederate constituents of the great Hindu Empire and to disillusion those aliens and enemies who fondly believed the Maratha mandal was bound to break up and disperse and could never survive the civil war, Nana had intentionally invited and received with imperial honours the great Chatrapati of Maharashtra himself when he reached Poona to grace the occasion of the marriage of his prime minister.

There, in the stately royal hall, the Chatrapati sat on his throne, surrounded by the brilliant throngs of his viceroys, and generals, and admirals, and statesmen, and chiefs, and princes, several of whom had commands over provinces as large as kingdoms in other continents. There were Patwardhans, Rastes, and Phadkes. There were represented Holkar and Shindia and Pawar and Gaikwad and Bhosale. The learning of all India,from Haridvar to Remashwar, was represented there. The Hindu kings of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur were cordially invited and represented there through their royal envoys. The Nizam and the Mogul and the European powers in India had sent then their presents and congratulatory gifts through their princes and envoys. Horse and cannon and in-

fantry camped round the capital for miles representing the sword and shield of Maharashtra. Angre and Dhulap represented the Navy, the former being fitly charged with the work of receiving the guests on behalf of the Peshwa. Gathering that mighty concourse under its specious folds floated those colours, the golden Geruwa, the orange and the gold—reminding the nation of their great mission or "Swadharma Rajya"—of Hindu-pad-padshahi.

At a given signal infantry and cavalry and artillery, all arms burst in a cheering acclamation and saluting shouted: "Victory: victory to our beloved prince: the Peshwa, so handsome, so young, accompanied by the most impressive pomp and ceremony, by heralds and retinue, slowly advanced and entered the hall of assembly. The assemblage stood up, bent low, and bowing in fealty paid the homage of the heart of a nation to the Peshwa in person who so long had been the theme and the hero of popular songs and myths. But what was the wonder of the assembly when they witnessed the young prince who was the real ruler of all India, advance to the Chatrapati, the King of Satara—who sat enthroned amidst the magnificent assembly—advance with his hands folded and thrice tied and wrapped round with garlands of flowers: for strict decorum required that the prime minister must enter the presence and approach the King of Maharashtra with his hands folded and tied in sign of submission. The scene drew

tears of joy, and national emotion from the eyes of many a sturdy warrior—even the nonchalant and serene face of the minister could not but betray emotion and big tears of joy were observed rolling down his cheeks. The political impression that this majestic celebration and display of unity, solidarity and oneness of aim, which in spite of occasional aberrations still ruled, informed and inspired the constituents of the Maratha Confederacy, produced on the minds of other Indian and European princes and powers, did not belie the expectations of Nana and other leaders of Maharashtra. Nor did it contribute little to the strengthening of the ties that bound the confederacy itself by emphasising and accentuating the consciousness belonging to a great and glorious Commonwealth, in virtue of which each constituent derived more strength and prestige and splendour than it could have done, if left to itself.

As the wounds of the civil war gradually healed, Maharashtra embarked on decades as prosperous and glorious and happy as any recorded in its history. Nana Fadnis and his able coadjutors put the administrative and financial and judicial machinery of the state on such a sound footing that, of all people and principalities in India, Maharashtra proper and the vast territories that were held by them under their direct control were the best ruled. The system of assessment and collection of taxes, the efficiency of popular control of justice and the relatively easy

opening which all, princes and peasants, could have to careers great and glorious, and above all the realisation of being the instruments in the fulfilment of a great mission for which their ancestors fought and which their Gods and saints sanctified and of belonging to a race that was sustaining, on its mighty shoulders, an Empire dedicated to the defence and the propagation of the cause of the Hindu Faith and Hindu Independence, made the people feel literally "blest for having been born in such days—worked for and witnessed such glorious achievements." The national atmosphere was charged with a sense of elevation and every one could not but breathe it in. News of some military triumph or other, of some new national achievement, poured constantly in. Even the lowest felt the times to be extraordinarily gifted and fondly attributed it all to the auspicious star that ruled over the moment of the birth of their fortunate and young beloved prince, Savai Madhao Rao, to whom a nation knelt in homage before he was born. It was the disappointed aspiration of Madhao Rao I, went the popular story, to destroy and avenge the rule of the Mussalmans, the alien and the faithless oppressors, and establish from sea to sea a powerful and Godly Hindu Empire that made him take the birth of Madhao Rao II, their beloved prince. That is why god blessed and fortune ever smiled on their national banner ever since the days the princely lad was born. Such popular and even fantastic

beliefs are at times but the dreamy babblings of the sub-conscious longings of a nation's soul and reveal in what light even the rank and file view their national undertakings and achievements.

Soon after the treaty of Salbai Nana ordered Parashram Bhau and Patwardhan to chastise Tippu who had succeeded Haidar and proved as redoubtable an enemy of the Marathas as any. Hostilities opened in 1784 as the Hindu principality of Nargund was grossly oppressed by Tippu and craved assistance from the Marathas. The Marathas under Patwardhan and Holkar, in alliance with the Nizam, forced Tippu to sign a treaty by which he promised to pay his arrears of tribute to the Marathas and cease to trouble Nargund any longer. But no sooner did the Marathas turn their backs than Tippu, bent upon practising a gross deception, tore off the treaty, took the fort of Nargund, treacherously seized the Hindu chief and his family and in keeping with the best traditions of the Faithful, barbarously tortured them to death and carried away the daughter of the Hindu chief to his seraglio; then, to lay for himself stores of heavenly merit and to earn the recommendations of the pious Moslem Maulvis and historians who readily raised to the dignity of a Defender of the Faith and a Gazi an Aurangzeb or a Timur, Tippu began to wreak a demoniacal vengeance on the Hindu population between the Krishna and the Tungbhadra by committing all the horrors of forcible conversions

to Islam that ever accompanied its spread. He, as if to challenge the claim of the Marathas as the protectors of the Hindu Faith, subjected many Hindus to forcible circumcision and other acts of indescribable violence. Be it noted to the credit of the unfortunate victims that, though they failed to fulfil the best and foremost duty of men of rising *en masse* and—as Ramdas had exhorted the Hindus and taught the Marathas to do—to die killing the torturing foes of their Faith and put down violence by force, yet they did not fail to do the next best thing of preferring death to dishonour. Not a man here or there, but not less than 2000 Brahmans alone who were the chief targets of Tippu's ghoulish fury chose to put an end to their lives rather than allow themselves to be subjected to the horrors of forcible conversion and apostate life. They voluntarily martyred themselves to their Faith. Before the rise of the Maratha power such things had been the order of the day. 'Rather get killed than converted' was the best that the Hindu could do. Ramdas rose and standing on the peaks of Sahyadri exclaimed ; "No : not thus : 'better get killed than converted' is good enough : but it would be better so to strive as neither to get killed nor violently converted by killing the forces of violence itself. Get killed if that must be but get killed while killing to conquer-conquer in the cause of Righteousness." With hundreds of his disciples preaching this warcry, through their

secret societies from Math to Math, from house to house, he taught the Hindus to covet, not only the crown of thorns, but also, and along with it, the laurelled diadem of victory. And yet in the face of all this Tippu dared to torture the Hindus into conversion and play the part of an Aurangzeb, while the descendants of Shivaji still ruled at Poona. The piteous cry of thousands of Brahmans and other Karnatak, Andhra and Tamil Hindus who had been the victims of the fanaticism of Tippu reached Poona, loudly calling for deliverance from the Moslem rule. Can the Brahman kingdom bear this all ? Can the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra listen with equanimity to the accounts of the horrible fate that had overtaken their co-religionists across the Krishna : it was a challenge to the Marathas as a Hindu power and they accepted it. Though their armies were busy in the north, as we shall presently see, fighting great battles against their foes, yet Nana determined to hasten to the rescue of his co-religionists and countrymen in the Karnatic. He bought off the Nizam by a promise of allotting him one third of whatever conquests they made in the territories of Tippu and ordered the Maratha forces to open a mighty offensive against the Moslem fanatic. Patwardhan and Behre and other Maratha generals, now concentrating and then spreading out in divisions, took Badami and other strongholds of the foe, harassed and thrashed him so often and so furiously as to drive him to take

shelter in the mountainous districts. There, too, unable to hold out any longer against the Hindu forces, the hero of Islam, who had distinguished himself so much by molesting women and children and by torturing peaceful Hindu priests and violating the chastity of Hindu girls, sued for peace and pardon at the hands of those very Hindus as soon as they proved themselves strong enough to blow his brains out. The humble and unresisting sufferings of thousands of Hindus and Hindu girls did not blunt the edge of his fanatical violence, but it rather sharpened it all the more. But what unresisting martyrdom failed to do, righteous and resisting force did and rendered tyranny impotent to do further harm. Tippu was forced to hand over the state of Nargund and Kittur and Badami to the Marathas, besides paying down 30 lakhs of rupees there and then as the arrears of his tribute to the Hindu power and promising to pay 15 lakhs more within a year. Now, had the Marathas meant to be mean like the Moslems, they were in a position to convert the Muhammadan population, those very Maulvis and Maulanas, by forcibly subjecting them to the comparatively harmless Hindu ceremony of keeping the *shika*, who had but so recently exhibited such criminal activities in outraging the Hindus under the orders of Tippu Sultan. But the Marathas neither pulled down mosques, nor forcibly took Muhammadan girls to their seraglios, nor outraged the Faith of other communities by persuading them at the point

of the bayonet to embrace the Hindu Faith. Such heroic deeds were obviously beyond their reach, as they failed to believe in the Koran as read by Timurs and Tippus and Allaudins and Aurangzebs. Only the "Faithful" are entitled to commit such acts of vandalism and violence, not so the "kaffirs."

Having delivered the Hindus from the fanatical fury of Tippu in the south, the Maratha armies were now able to concentrate their efforts in subduing a great coalition that their enemies had formed in the north and whom Mahadaji Shindia had single-handed held in check so long. After the treaty of Salbai Mahadaji had repaired to the north. He had been deeply impressed by the efficiency of the disciplined troops under the European commander and his first care was to carry out the scheme of Sadashivrao Bhau, the hero of Panipat, who was the first great Indian commander, not only to appreciate, but to attempt on a large scale, the use of a regular army manned and drilled and disciplined after the European model. Mahadaji raised a powerful force under De Boigne, a French general, and equipped it so efficiently, as to challenge the strength of any European army. Backed up by these, he soon found himself in a position to dictate terms to all those who dared to oppose him in his designs in the north. Although the English had to promise to withdraw from the lists of imperial politics at Delhi and leave the Marathas free to do as they liked, still they did not cease to foment as much

discontent and put as many difficulties as they secretly could in the way of Mahadaji by trying to keep the Emperor Shah Alum in their hands and prevent him from going over to the Marathas. But in spite of all that, Mahadaji held the reins of Imperial politics firmly in his hands, brought the Emperor to Delhi and defeated the wretched Muhammadan claimants to the post of Vazirship and, to the utter chagrin of his Moslem and European rivals, drove the last nail in the coffin of the Moslem Empire by making the Emperor declare Mahadaji his Vazir, hand over the command of the imperial forces to him and deliver up the two provinces of Delhi and Agra to his administration. Not only that, but the Mogul Emperor conferred the dignity of Vazir-i-mutalik on the Peshwa and thus virtually empowered him to act in the name of the Emperor and as a 'Maharajadhiraj,' the King of Kings, in return for receiving 65000 rupees for his private expenses, and the luxury of being called an Emperor. The situation, that this startling constitutional change created, could be best described in the words of a contemporary Maratha correspondent. "The Empire has become ours. The old Mogul is but a pensioner, and a willing pensioner, in our hands. He is still called Emperor: that is all that he wants and we must continue the show for a while." The English, too, after they had found themselves in a similar situation, could not but keep up that show right down to 1857. Mahadaji wished to signalise this event by some

great moral appeal to all Hindudom. So the Hindu regime was heralded by the issue of orders preventing the killing of bullocks and cows all over the Indian Empire. Nor did Mahadaji allow this change in the political status to be merely a verbal one. The Marathas were not likely to be a King Log. They immediately began to reduce all recalcitrant elements and fuse them into a great and mighty Hindu Empire, led by the Maharashtra Mandal. The first act of Mahadaji was to demand from the English themselves the arrears of imperial tribute and the Maratha Chowth and Sardeshmukhi. His next step was to levy revenue and reduce those viceroys and zamindars of those provinces who had for years acted as if they were independent rulers. This step raised a storm all over the north. Nobles and amirs and khans, all rose in arms against the Maratha power. Not only that: even the Rajas and Raos joined hands with the Moslems and the English against the only Hindu power that could have established a Hindu Empire in India. It was very natural, but very unfortunate. The two great Rajput states, Jaipur and Jodhpur formed a coalition against the Marathas, stronger than they had ever formed against the Moslem or the English and, in co-operation with the Muhammadan forces all over the north, gave a great battle to Shindia's army at Lalsote. In the thick of the fight the Imperial Moslem forces under the command of Mahadaji, went bodily over to the Rajputs at a preconcerted signal

and the Marathas, thus suddenly betrayed, suffered a defeat. But nothing tested the mettle of the Maratha commander as this sudden reverse did. Undaunted, he immediately succeeded in rallying the forces of Maharashtra ; Lakhobadada, the Maratha general who held the fort of Agra which was sorely pressed by the Muhammadans, offered a brave and stubborn resistance and thus stayed the swelling tide of Mahadaji's foes. Just then Gulam Khader, the grandson of Nazibkhan whom the Marathas had not either forgotten or forgiven, appeared on the scene with the Rohillas and Pathans, aiming to rescue Delhi from the hands of Mahadaji. The foolish Emperor encouraged him and he entered Delhi, while Mahadaji was busy fighting about Agra against the forces of Muhmmadans and Rajputs risen in arms against him on all sides. Mahadaji had already acquainted Nana of the unfavourable turn events had taken in the north and represented that it was the disappointed ambition of the English that was at the bottom of all this trouble. They dared not oppose the Marathas face to face. They had tried to do it and failed. Yet they knew that, if the Marathas were allowed to use the name and authority of the Emperor for a little longer, they were sure to tear even the thin veil that kept up the show and openly assume the Imperial dignity themselves, which in fact they had already almost done. So the English were most eager to possess and hold in their hand the power of the old Mogul, the painted Emperor. " Let

us not forget," the great Maratha commander eloquently exhorted his people at home in his letter to Nana, "that we live and work and will die in the interests of this our great Empire, that we owe allegiance to one common master, the head of our Commonwealth. Let us disavow all feelings of jealousy or personal aggrandisement. If any one of you personally entertain any suspicions as to my intentions, I humbly beg of you to banish them all. My services to the Commonweath are enough to silence calumniators who are our real enemies and try to feather their nests by keeping us divided. Let us all rise equal to the occasion, rally round the national standard; and let the cause of our nation, the great mission handed down to us by our forefathers, be upheld in all Hindustan; let us prevent this our great Empire from being disunited and overthrown." Nana was not the man to listen to this noble appeal with indifference when the national cause was in danger. As we have already seen, he had been conducting a war against Tippu and as soon as he had sufficiently humbled him, he despatched Holkar and Alija Bahadar to strengthen Mahadaji's hands. He regretted to find that the Rajputs and the Marathas should have come to blows and thus afforded an opportunity to the enemies of Hindudom to raise their heads just when the grand dream of their forefathers was all but accomplished and a great Hindu Empire brought into being, that promised well to unite within its folds all Hindustan.

So Nana tried to open negotiations with the Rajputs, and especially the King of Jaipur, in the name of the Peshwa and tried to persuade them not to make common cause with the foes of Hindudom and somehow find out a way to reconcile themselves with the Hindu Empire that the Marathas had well-nigh established. Supported by the Maratha armies despatched from Poona, Mahadaji soon humbled his foes. He sent forward Banakhan, Appa Khanderao and other Maratha generals, supported by two regular battalions of De Boigne, to oppose Gulam Khader, the grandson of Nazibkhan the author of Panipat. The Muhammadans determined to give a battle. Two hotly contested battles were fought. The Muhammadans were broken and beaten as never before. They fled in all directions. Ismail Beg and Gulam Khader ran towards Delhi, hotly pursued by the Marathas. The Emperor trembled. Gulam Khader demanded money. The Emperor could not produce it. Mad with fury the cruel and barbarous Rohilla chief commenced a a systematic train of violence and rapine. He pulled the Emperor down from his throne and threw him on the ground and, with his knees planted on his breast, thrust his dagger in the eyes of the old and helpless descendant of Akbar and Aurangzeb and destroyed them in their sockets. Not satisfied with this cruelty he drove and dragged out his wives and daughters, exposed them rudely and ordered his menials to outrage them before his very eyes. One of the

causes of this inhuman fury was that Gulam Khader was castrated and emasculated in his youth under the orders of this Emperor Shah Alum. Plunder ran riot in the capital. Muhammadans committed such atrocities over Muhammadans as they were wont to commit on others in the name of Muhammadanism. Thus a tyrant outside sooner or later turns out a tyrant at home. Thus does tyranny fall a victim to itself. But who will save now the Muhammadan Emperor, citizens and Muhammadan girls from these barbarous tortures and beastly outrages perpetrated by the followers of Islam? Who else but Kaffirs, the Hindus—the Marathas? It was the occupants of this Mogul, and even before that the Muhammadan, throne of Delhi that had razed the temples of the Hindus to the ground, had smitten their images into dust, had carried by force queens and princesses to their harem, had violated the chastity of their girls and the Faith of their youths, had snatched mother from child and brother from brother and had their hands and hearts red in the Hindu blood that they might invite the honours of a Gazi and a Defender of the Faith in this world and gather a large harvest of meritorious rewards in the other: and now these very Hindus are coming to Delhi not to raze mosques to the ground, not to smite the crescents or the tombs into dust, nor to violate—why violate?—not even to touch the princesses or even a peasant girl in the poorest Moslem cottage, nor to forcibly convert and snatch away mother from child

or son from father, nor to indulge recklessly in the wine of ruin or get intoxicated with bloodshed, nor to measure the greatness of their success by the height of the ghastly columns of heads cut off from the trunks of their slain foes, or by the flames of their burning capitals. They could have done so: had they done so, at any rate the Muhammadans could not have blamed them. The Hindus are fast approaching only to relieve the Moslem occupant of that very throne and that very capital from tortures and outrages,ghastly and ghoulish at the hands of the Moslems themselves! The city prayed for the arrival of the Marathas, and the whole populace, Muhammadans and Hindus, burst into the most hearty reception when the armies of the Hindu Empire entered the city gates. Alija Bahadar, Appa Khanderao, Ranakhan and De Boigne took possession of the city, but found that the criminal, Gulam Khader, had already left it. He was the grandson of Nazib and a hereditary enemy of the Marathas. He was not likely to escape the punishment he deserved. The Marathas did everything which humanity dictated to relieve the descendants of Aurangzeb from the torturing hands of Moslems themselves, in spite of the fact that he had only very recently conspired against the Marathas and joined the very Gulam Khader in fomenting a coalition similar to that which his grandfather Nazib had formed against the Marathas at Panipat. A large body had already been sent to pursue Gulam Khader who

entered the fort of Meerut and began to offer a vigorous defence. But it was impossible to hold out long against the Marathas. So he mounted a horse and fled, but in the confusion of the pursuit he fell from his horse and lay stunned in a field, whence some villagers, recognising him, carried him to the Maratha camp. No one was louder in demanding for an exemplary punishment of that fiend than the Muhammadan public itself. The wretch was produced before Shinde to whom the family of Gulam had for three successive generations borne implacable hatred. Gulam had to pay for all that. He was subjected to fearful mutilations and, as he still persisted in abusing, his tongue and eyes too were pulled out and pierced. At last, horribly mutilated, Gulam, the grandson of Nazibkhan, was sent to the Emperor who longed to learn that the human fiend who had subjected him to such fearful tortures was as fearfully punished and killed. Thus the family of Nazibkhan, who had sworn to destroy the Marathas at Panipat, got itself destroyed at the hands of the Marathas and not a trace of them or their principality was left behind.

By the year 1789, Mahadaji, along with other Maratha generals, had succeeded in subduing their opponents, defeated and destroyed the Muhammadan clique and their Rajput partisans, and humbled the English by fronting them with such a display of power as to make them think discretion the better part of valour. The old Emperor was again secured and

when he again wished to confirm the honour and titles of the highest imperial office of Vakil-i-mutalik, on Mahadaji, the latter waived it once more in deference to his master, the young Peshwa at Poona.

But while the Maratha, forces were thus fully occupied in the north, Tippu wanted to try his hand again. In 1798 he assumed a threatening attitude. But instead of provoking directly the Marathas by attacking their territory, he aimed to extend his possessions—if it was made difficult on the side of Krishna by the presence of the Marathas, then, by attacking the Hindu chief of Travancore—his weaker neighbour. So Nana, in alliance with the English and the Nizam, declared war on Tippu and Patwardhan invaded his territories. As the Marathas advanced, be it noted, the local inhabitants made common cause with them against the fanatical tyrant of Mysore and helped the Marathas in driving Tippu's officers, and men, and aided in collecting the outstanding revenue. Taking Hubly, Dodvad, Misricot, the Marathas advanced with irresistible might. Dharwad that had lately fallen in Tippu's hand was besieged. The Muhammadan general there offered a stubborn resistance. The English, in spite of the advice of the Maratha general, once attempted to take the fort by storm, but disastrously failed. The struggle continued and was doggedly maintained by both the sides. At last the Marathas with valorous skill lodged charge after charge, and

took the fort. Panse, Raste and other Maratha generals crossed the Tungabhadra, took Santi, Badnoor, Maikoda, Hapenoor, Chengiri and other posts under the enemy. The Maratha Navy too lay not idle. It guarded the coast and marching along it drove the Moslem officers from many a place in Karwar and Hansar. Narsingrao Deoji, Ganpatrao Mehendale and other Maratha officers took Chandavar, Honavar, Girisapa, Dhareshwar, Udgini, and then the Maratha armies marched towards Shrirangpatan itself. There, from the other side, was marching the English force led by Cornwallis. But at that time they were so thoroughly starved and tired out by the tactics of Tippu that they could hardly have a full meal a day. Their cavalry, for want of fodder, got automatically converted into infantry as the horses fell in heaps. What was their joy when the English forces in this helpless and starved-out condition beheld the columns of the Maratha army advancing towards them well furnished like a gay bazaar with all the necessaries of life and even its luxuries ! Haripant Phadke evinced a human anxiety to relieve the furnished camp of his allies. The confederate armies remained for ten days together and if the Marathas were minded so, they could have surely crushed "Tippu's" kingdom out of existence. But Nana's policy did not sanction Tippu's annihilation. He wanted him to continue a little longer as a useful check on the ambitious English designs in Madras. So when, after some further

conflict and a sound thrashing at the hands of the English and the Marathas Tippu abjectly sued for peace. Parashram Bhau and Haripant Phadke intervened and persuaded the English to grant terms. By these Tippu had to hand over half of his kingdom to the Marathas and pay an indemnity of 3 crores of rupees and refrain from molesting the Hindu state of Travancore. Two of his sons were held as hostages by the allies. The gains were divided equally amongst and Marathas, the English and the Nizam, by which the first recovered a vast territory yielding 90 lakhs of rupees a year and a crore of rupees as their share of the indemnity. Thus ended the third great war with Tippu and the Maratha forces reached their capital back in 1792 A.D. with honour and military distinction.

But loaded with honours as splendid and military distinction more dazzling than any, the Northern commander of the Maratha Empire, too, was just then winding his way towards the capital of Maharashtra. The concourse of these mighty forces, Phadke and Raste who had subdued the south and delivered Hindudom there from the fanatical fury of Tippu, and Mahadaji who had subdued all north, reduced the Moslem Emperor practically into a pensioner of the Hindu Empire and assumed, in the teeth of the English and French, the Pathans and Rohillas, imperial powers all but in name—the concourse of these mighty men at Poona threw every foreign court in India and

outside in to consternation and suspense as to its future fate. What must be the object of this concourse? What would be the next step that the mighty Hindu Confederacy of Maharashtra was likely to take and who could be its next object or victim? All eyes in India turned towards Poona: for Delhi no longer counted for anything. Delhi had been reduced into a mere suburb of Poona. But Mararashtra herself grew uneasy with misgivings of quite a contrary nature. The two gaints, Nana and Mahadaji, had come face to face. All knew that, slowly but surely, a suppressed sense of rivalry was growing into mutual fear between these two patriotic men, held up till now in check only by the noble devotion and love which both equally bore towards the great Hindu Commonwealth that generations of Maharashtra had built up and in whose defence and for the augmentation of whose power and glory no two men had more whole-heartedly worked than these two themselves. Was that suppressed sense of rivalry now likely to burst out in open hostility? Woe to the Hindu Empire if it ever did! All Maharashtra trembled to think of it and watched with breathless anxiety the giant struggle between the foremost of their warriors and the foremost of their statesmen.

We have already stated how the old Mogul, who was still allowed by the Marathas to style himself as an Emperor, wished to confer on Mahadaji the highest

honour and title that he could bestow, of *Vakil-i-mutalik* and *Maharajadhiraj*, and how Mahadaji, refusing to accept them for himself, secured them for his master, the young Pashwa at Poona. This was no empty show. Although in the hands of a powerless and incapable courtier these titles would not have been worth the paper on which they were written, yet they were not likely to remain the mere hollow sounding words that they were. They empowered their holder with full power to rule in the name of the Emperor, they meant in fact the resignation of the imperial power on the part of the Emperor. The rivalry between the English and other non-Hindu powers and the Marathas for the Imperial Crown of India had made it a point to let the Imperial Crown and titles remain, even if in name, with the old Mogul. To divest him of it was sooner done than said. But as the English and other Muhammadan powers knew that, if once they allowed them to drift in the hands of the Marathas, they would place them almost beyond their reach, they jealously persisted in burning incense to the fetish of the old Mogul, and made a show of recognising him as the Emperor just to sipte the Marathas. How this tendency was evident in the public life of India could best be seen by the English anxiety to secure for them the permission of the Emperor Shah Alum to hold the Northern Sarkars, which they had already been holding through the right of their own

might. So the Marathas too were not a whit behind their rivals in trying to make immense capital out of the shadows of the imperial dignities that still clung to the name of this old Mogul, long after they had firmly grasped the substance of it in their hands. That is why Mahadaji made the Emperor confer the titles and powers of a *Maharajadhiraj* and *Vakil-i-mutalik* of the Emperor on the head of the Maratha confederacy. And now that he had come all his way to Poona after a long and glorious career in the north, home sick and anxious to see his beloved infant-chief grown into a young God, his first step was to invest him with these titles and imperial powers with great ceremonial pomp.

But while the Maratha commander was anxious to formally invest the Peshwa with the honours and insignia of a Maharajadhiraj—the king of kings,—which in fact he already was, Nana, the Brahman minister, led the party that objected to it as derogatory to the Maratha King of Satara. There could be cited several examples of citizens and even officers of an independent kingdom accepting honours and even services at the hands of and under another state and without forswearing or betraying their own state, nay, at times with the explicit motive and purpose of advancing its interests. Even then, not to wound any national susceptibilities in the least, Mahadaji applied to, and of course secured, the permission of the Maharaja of Satara, the Chatrapati of the

Marathas himself, for the investiture. The constitutional difficulty being thus overcome, the grand ceremony was most imposingly celebrated and the dignity and insignia of vakil-i-mutalik was formally conferred on the Peshwa as an inalienable inam to descend in his family as a hereditary office. The Peshwa could now act in the name of the Emperor, nay, his commander Mahadaji was bestowed with a power even to choose an heir to the Moslem Emperor from amongst his sons. Now the great farman prohibiting the massacre of bullocks and cows throughout the Indian Empire was formally read out. The Shindia and Nana Fadnis, along with other officers of the Peshwa, made presents of congratulations to him. Now the Marathas had empowered themselves with an effective instrument with which they could stab the jealousy of their rivals, whether European or Asiatic, which pretended to look upon the Emperor as the only source of all legal and constitutional power in India just to spite the Marathas. Even constitutionally, as in fact, the Marathas claimed to be recognised and meant to act in the place of, personate so to say, the Emperor of India. They were the commander-in-chief of the Imperial forces, the Vazir of the Empire. they could nominate the heir to the throne and above all were *vakil-i-mutalik* and *Maharajadhiraj* inalienably and hereditarily.

But when once the ceremony was over, the vast concourse of people assembled to witness the

proccession back to the palace. The shouts of the populace, the salvos of cannon, volleys of musketry had produced all the effect that the projector of his state ceremony could possibly have desired. After the procession arrived at the palace and he was invested with the great honours by the Peshwa, Mahadaji, the commander-in-chief of the Indian Empire, laid aside all pomp and power, advanced alone and, picking up the slippers of the Peshwa, lowly spake: "Sire ! Maharaj ! Princes aud Potentates, Rajas and Ranas, Moguls and Turks and Rohillas, the Moslems and the Feringees have been vanquished and reduced to obedience to thee—the head of our Hindu Empire. Thy servant has spent the best part of his life ever since thy birth, sword in hand in distant lands in the service of our Commonwealth. But all the honours and emoluments, all the pomp and power that vanquished kingdoms could yield, have failed to appease my thirst for the honour of being allowed to sit at thy feet, and, resuming the duties of my ancestors, take charge of these thy royal slippers. I long more to be addressed by the cherished epithet of a simple 'Patel' and in Maharashtra, than as the Grand Vazir of the Mogul Empire. So, please to relieve me of these mighty cares in distant lands and let me serve thee. Give me leave to serve, even as my ancestors served, as one of thy favoured personal attendants."

Mahadaji was a master of winning phraseology. Savai Madhao Rao the noble-minded Peshwa, was a

youth, good-naturedand frank and not without a trained insight in politics. Mahadaji was doubtless attached and devoted to him and soon succeeded in drawing his young chief towards him. Encouraged by this, Mahadaji began to aim at the position of being the chief minister of the realm and handle the power which Nana Fadnis held. As time went on, he openly intervened in some cases against the decision of the minister and catching a favourable opportunity in one of those occasional excursions which the young Peshwa often loved to enjoy along with Mahadaji, the latter openly touched the subject. But he was suprised to find the good-natured Peshwa seriously rejoin, " Listen, Nana and Mahadaji are two hands of my realm the first is my right hand, the second the left, each best fitted to do its work. Through their united help the Empire prospers. They can neither be exchanged nor cut off and cast away without fatal disabling me."

This conversation, in spite of all precautions that Mahadaji took, could not escape the watchful and masterly scrutiny of the intelligence department organised by Nana. The report alarmed Nana, Haripant Phadke and all the ministerial party in, Poona. The grand object of their life of uniting all India under the colours of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra with the Peshwa at their head and preventing all attempts of the confederates to assert their independence, seemed to them in danger. That

they could not tolerate so long as they lived. But if it was only a question of their being removed from the position they occupied, then it was their duty to withdraw, dangerous though they really deemed such a withdrawal was bound to be to public interests rather than risk an open civil war. So Nana hastened to come to an explanation with the young Peshwa and enumerating the services he had rendered to the state and the person of the Peshwa ever since his birth, he lamented the evil effects that would ensue if he allowed himself to be misled by Shindia's ambitious designs which tended towards reducing the Peshwa to a helpless puppet in his hands as the Mogul Emperor had been. Any sudden attempt to introduce so great an innovation in the constitution of the Maratha confederacy would bring on a civil war, so terrible as to cause the ruin of the great Empire they had built and furnish an opportunity to the Moslems who even then were making great preparations at Hyderabad to overwhelm the Hindu power and the English who of all were the most capable of realising the ambition of overthrowing the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra. But, if it was only a question of his personal removal from power—if the young Peshwa was anxious only to get rid of Nana, then, moved to tears, the grand old minister said "Here is my resignation. If that could save the realm, avoid a civil war and please thee, sire, then accept this and allow me to proceed to Benares and to retire

from the world". The young Madhao Rao was greatly affected. Touched to the quick by this pathetic prayer of his most revered minister that builder of an Empire—the Peshwa exclaimed : " What makes you minded thus ? Thou hast been, not only a minister, but a guide and friend and philosopher unto me. This realm rests on thy shoulder and would come down in a crash as soon as thou withdrawest." Nana, his voice vibrating with emotion, said: "Sire, ever since thy birth, nay, even before thy birth, I have been incurring the hostility of a host of enemies for having been faithful to thy cause and persisting in my dutiful services towards this realm. But now the services are forgotten. The enemies alone survive." The generous-minded youth, thrown at this in a transport of grief, forgetting that he was the chief and the other his minister and overpowered by simple human affection, threw his hands round the neck of Nana and sobbed out: "Forsake me not, nor grieve : thou hast been not a minister only but a veritable father unto me since my infancy. Forgive me if gone astray. I will not permit thee either to resign or to retire. I will not forsake thee ."

Strengthened by these moving assurances of the Pashwa, Nana, Haripant Phadke and other leaders of the ministerial party took Mahadaji, too, by an equally effective surprise. Mahadaji, whatever his personal ambition be, was as devoted as any of his co-workers to the magnificent Hindu Empire their nation had built

and would have been amongst the first to sacrifice his life to prevent any non-Hindu alien from any attempt to dominate or undermine it. Mahadaji was not a Raghoba Dada. In spite of his ambition to hold absolutely in his hands the helm of the Maratha realm, he did not mean to embark on a civil war, and so readily undertook to come to an understanding with the ministerial party and abide by the wishes of the Peshwa. When on being confronted all of a sudden by Haripant Phadke and others, he was informed that, whereas he meant to concentrate all ministerial powers in his own hands and whereas the rivalry between themselves was sure to do the greatest harm to the cause of the Hindu Empire they so dearly loved, by strengthening the hands of their foes. Nana had decided to lay down that pen which made and unmade kingdoms and voluntarily resigned his powers rather than involve his nation into a disastrous civil war. Mahadaji could not but be deeply touched and promised to withdraw all opposition to Nana and his party. As it happened on several other occasions, so on this one, too, the patriotic and noble national instincts of the Maratha people got better of their selfish proclivities and the two most powerful men once more met as friends. Sitting at the feet of the Peshwa, they swore to forget all that had passed between them and to continue in their respective capacities to serve their common chief and the great national Commonwealth that stood for the holy cause of the Defence

and the Propogation of the Hindu Faith and the Hindu-pad-padashahi.

The news of this happy event that the giants had shaken hands, that the misunderstanding between the two most prominent leaders of their Empire had disappeared, gladdened Maharashtra from end to end. How great was the relief felt by every lover of the Hindu cause could best be seen in the eloquent letter despatched by Govind Rao Kale, one of the most talented and patriotic diplomats of Maharashtra, on learning this happy news. He writes to Nana Fadnis from the capital of the Nizam where he held the position of Political Resident of the Maratha Empire :

"Your letter thrilled me with joy and made me inexpressibly happy. It spoke volumes and gave rise to a flood of thoughts in my mind. All the country that lies from the river Attock to the Indian ocean, is the land of the Hindus—a Hindustan, and not a Turkstan, the land of the Turks. These had been our frontiers from the times of the Pandavas down to those of Vikramaditya. They held it against all aliens and ruled over it. But those who succeeded them as rulers turned out so incapable and impotent to wield the sceptre that the Yavanas, the aliens, conquered us and deprived us of our political independence. The descendants of Babar seized the kingdom of Hastinapore, of Delhi, and eventually, during the reign of Aurangzeb, we were reduced to such straits that even

our religious liberty was denied to us and the wearer of a sacred thread was required to pay a poll-tax and forced to buy and eat impure food.

"At this critical time in our history was born the great Shivaji, the founder of an era, the defender of the Hindu Faith. He liberated a corner of our land and that afforded protection to our Faith. Then came Nanasaheb and Bhausaheb, heroes of pre-eminent prowess, the grandeur of whose greatness shone amongst men as does that of the Sun. Now every thing that was lost had been regained by us under the benign auspicious reign of his Excellency the Peshwa, owing to the astute skill and invincible sword of our Patel—our Mahadaji Shindia. But the wonder is how could all this happen? Success once securely won makes us blind to its marvellous achievements. Had the Muhammadans won any such triumph, volumes of history would have sung its glory. Amongst the Moslems a trifling deed is immediately extolled to the skies. But amongst us Hindus, however magnificent our expliots be, not even a mention is made of them by us. But, in fact, the marvellous has happened. The inaccessible is won. The Moslems openly lament that the kingdom has passed into the hands of the Kaffirs: the Kafir-shahi has come.

"And really every one who dared to raise his head against us in Hindustan, Mahadaji smashed him down. Indeed, we have achieved what seemed beyond human achievement to consolidate and put it

all in order and to enjoy the blessings of sovereignty and empire even as the mighty emperors of old did. Yet much remains to be done. No one in the meanwhile can tell when or where our merit will fail us, or the evil eye of the wicked cause harm. For our achievement is not limited only to the acquisition of territory, merely material rule, but it also means and includes the preservation of the Vedas and the Shastras of Hindu civilization, the propgation of Righteousness, the protection of the cows and the Brahmans, of the humble and the good, the conquest of an empire and national suzereignty, the diffusion of fame and far-reaching triumph. The secret of the alchemy that yielded such miraculous results lies in your hand and that of Mahadaji. The slight estrangement between you two strengthens the hands of our foes. But the news of your mutual concord has now set all my misgivings at rest, encompassed as we are by malevolent foes and secret enemies on all sides. Now let these our forces lie encamped in the the plains of Lahore and press on towards the frontiers. Let the enemies get bitterly disappointed who expected them to come is collision amongst themselves. I was so restless about it all. But your letter has cleared the mist. Well done: Splendid indeed: Now I feel quite at ease." This one single letter penned with such ease and grace by one of the actors gives a truer expression to the spirit of our history than many a dull volume had done.

But amidst this clash of great fears and hopes, Mahadaji, to the intense grief of all Maharashtra, was caught by a violent fever and breathed his last at his camp at Wanavdi, near Poona, on the 12th February, 1794 A. D.

As was very natural, this sudden death of the most powerful of the Maratha chiefs and commanders revived the designs of her enemies against her power and made them eager to attack her before she recovered her strength again after this blow, which they fondly fancied to be a dreadful one. Amongst these enemies the Nizam of Hyderabad had of late been making great preparations for wreaking a terrible vengeance on that Hindu power which for generations had held him under its thumb and reduced him to be a mere tributary to it. He had increased his force from two regular battalions to 23 regular infantry under the cammand of a capable French officer. His minister, Misrulmulk, was an ambitious Moslem who could not tolerate the latest assumption of imperial prerogative and power by the Marathas under Mahadaji's directions. The Moslem population of the state was sedulously whipped into a war fever and kept bragging from bazaar to bazaar of the day that was soon to come when the standard of the Faithful would float over Poona and the Kafirshahi—the Rule of the Hindu—come to an end. The bellicose attitude of the minister of the Nizam grew so daring as to demand, when he was presented with claims for Chowth by the

political Resident of Maharashtra there, the presence of Nana himself at Hyderabad to explain the claims. "If", he continued 'Nana will not come, I will soon bring him here." As if this insult was not deemed sufficient to excite a war, the Nizam arranged for a royal show to which envoys were deliberately invited and in their presence made some of his courtiers masquerade the parts of Nana and Savai Madhao Rao—the Peshwa himself—to the great merriment of the Mogul court. Thereupon Govindrao Pingle and Govindrao Kale, the two Maratha envoys at the Nizam's court, got up and entered a strong protest against the insolent treatment meted out to them. "Listen," said the spirited Maratha in the end, "oh Mushrulmulk ! thou hast more than once assured thyself of thy power to campel Nana, the minister of all Maharashtra, to come to thy court. Thou hast also made thy courtiers exhibit the mask of my master. Here I throw a counter-challenge that I am no Govindrao Kale if thou art not captured, carried away alive by the Marathas, and exhibited in person in the streets of the capital of our Hindu Empire." With these ominous words the Maratha envoys left the court of the Nizam, repaired to Poona and demanded a war. The English attempt to arrogate to themselves the right of negotiating between the parties was so sternly rebuked that they gave up all thought of dabbling in Maratha affairs, and dared not even to raise a finger in favour

of the Nizam in spite of his solicitations. The Nizam had made great preparations for the war. The Moslem element in his state was roused by appeals to their sentiments, till they talked of a holy war against the Kafirs and secured the sympathies of Moslems from far and near for the undertaking. Poona was to be burnt and looted by the armies of the Faithful. These vaunts of the populace were nothing to the vainglorious bombast that Mushrulmulk, their minister, publicly indulged in, when he seriously declared that he was bent on delivering the Moguls once and for all from the tyrannical sway of the Marathas and send their head, the young Brahman Peshwa, to Benares with but a rag about his loins as a mendicant to beg from door to door.

While the minister at Hyderabad was bragging and boasting to no end, the minister at Poooa was coolly calculating his forces and laying down his plans. In spite of the death of the most powerful of their generals and chiefs, Mahadaji Shindia, the Marathas rose equal to the occasion. The genius of Nana never shone so brilliantly, his influence over his people never proved so supreme, as now. His word moved armies from distant capitals of the far-flung Maratha Empire. His wisdom rallied the most recalcitrant constituents into a harmonious whole. The great national standard of war was unfurled at Poona and round that Hope of Hindu-pad-padashahi began to muster the armies of Maharashatra from far

and near. Daulatrao Shindia who had succeeded Mahadaji was summoned there with Jivba Dada Bukshee, the defender of Agra, and others of his generals and troops that had subdued all north,—Pathans, Rohillas, Turks. Tukoji Holkar with his forces was already there. Raghoji Bhosle with a powerful army set out from Nagpur. The Gaikwad led a strong detachment from Baroda to fight in the common cause. Patwardhans and Rastes, Rajebahadur and Vinchurkar, Ghatge and Chavan, Dafle and Pawar, Thorat and Patanker, with several other less conspicuous chiefs and officers and generals, attended the summons. The Peshwa himself marched out with his armies accompanied by his great minister. This was the first time that the young Peshwa personally accompanied a battle march. This presence of their popular prince inspired the Maratha soldiers most, and constituted the chief attraction of this campaign. The Nizam was first in the field. His army was no less than one hundred and ten thousand horse and foot, supported by a powerful artillery brought to an up-to-date efficiency. His forces presented such an imposing display of martial strength and fanatical fervour that the Moguls grew cocksure of the results. The Marathas, in spite of the fact that large bodies of their efficient forces were necessarily held back to guard the frontiers of their Emperor, spread out in all parts of India, mustered one hundred and thirty thousand strong. The two grand armies came in

touch with each other near the frontiers of the Maratha territory about Paranda. Nana had asked for written opinion from his chief generals as to the best plan of campaign, and chose what he deemed best. He entrusted the post of the generalissimo of all Maratha armies to Parashram Bhau Patwardhan. As soon as the advanced guards of both the hostile parties came within musket shot, the fight began. In the few first skirmishes the Pathans forced detached parties of the Marathas to fall back and Parashram Bhau, happening to be in one of these on a reconnoitering expedition, the affair was magnified in the Mogul camp into so big a success as to be celebrated by a public congratulatory Darbar. But the Nizam soon found out his mistake when the main body of the Maratha forces came to close quarters. Ahmedallikhan, with 50000 picked force, met the Marathas and charged them with great vehemence. The Maratha division belonging to the Bhosle's forces received them with a terrible discharge of rockets. Soon the batteries of Shindia opened a dreadful side fire. The fight was furious, but, caught between the Maratha fires, the Muhammadans, in spite of the exhorting shouts of *Alla-ho-Akbar*, could not hold their ground. They broke and their cavalry was utterly routed. The Marathas advanced and closed them in to complete their discomfiture. The Nizam too got alarmed out of his wits, withdrew from the field and could only find shelter behind the darkness of the approaching

night. Irregular fight continued all the night, causing so great a havoc and confusion in the Mogul army that the forces of the Faithful, in spite of the stimulating assurance of frothy maulavies of their being engaged in a holy war, did not desist from plundering their own camp and take to heels as fast as they could. But the Maratha camp-followers were on their track, and soon eased them of all that ill gotten booty. The morning revealed the Nizam taking up a new position behind the fortifications of a village fort at Khurda and his army, numbering some ten thousand men, posted round in battle array. The Marathas thereupon brought forth their cannon, and from every hill and hillock in the vicinity a dreadful fire opened. Two days the Mogul bore it all. Not only his beard, but even his moral courage, got literally scorched by the batteries of Maharashtra. At last on the 3rd day, parched with thirst, smothered and throttled, the enemy asked for cessation of arms. The Maratha answer was : " Mushrulmulk first and then the talk of anything else. He must make amends for the gross and cowardly insults he so wantonly flung at the Maratha envoy, nay, at the minister of all Maharashtra, " Crestfallen, the Moslem handed over his Faithful minister Mushrulmulk to the Marathas and signified his wish to sign any terms the Marathas dictated. All the territory lying between the Paranda and Tapti was handed over to the Marathas, besides 3 crores of rupees as the arrears of Chowthai and

indemnity of war in addition to 29 lakhs to be separately paid out to the Bhosle." On these conditions the Marathas allowed the man to go back alive to his capital who came out to burn and loot Poona and send the Peshwa to Benares to beg from door to door.

Mushrulmulk was escorted to the Maratha camp through rows of the victorious "Kaffirs." As he passed a captive through the camp the rank and file raised uncontrollable shouts of victory. of *Harhara Mahadev.* They had caught him, the person who had bragged of capturing Nana. They had kept the promise of their envoy: but after having done this the noble-minded minister and the amicable Peshwa of Maharashtra treated their fallen foe with distinction and, having proved that they could have exhibited him in person from door to door in Poona, spared him any further humiliation. Nana forgave, as the Marathas were prone to do after having proved that they possessed the power to punish.

The Peshwa with all his officers entered the capital of Maharashtra in a great triumphal procession. Great multitudes from far and near poured into the capital to offer a national welcome back to their warriors and their beloved young Peshwa. Poona was gaily decorated and accorded the grandest and heartiest reception to her victorious sons. The ladies lined the balconies and galleries and terraces of the princely mansions of the richest capital of Hindustan

and showered flowers and the auspicious "Lahyas" on the warriors, commanders, statesmen and the Peshwa, as the procession passed by. Young maidens and damsels stood waiting in front of their doors, and loyally waved their little lights about the noble person of their youthful prince. He proceeded towards his palace, receiving imperial salutes from his devoted people. Many of the most distinguished commanders and chiefs of the Empire lay encamped with their vast and victorious armies for miles and miles round their national capital, and presented to the world such a bold and united and conquering front as to make all recall the palmiest days of the magnificent Hindu Empire when the great Nanasaheb ruled and the heroic Bhau led its forces.

Let us leave them there for a while: the young fortunate and happy prince to enjoy the devoted popularity of his people: the grand mighty minister busy now in distributing the splendid acquistions of the conquest amongst the constituents of the Commonwealth, in settling the different claims and complaints and various questions of policy and in consulting with envoys, viceroys and commanders, as to the future activities and undertakings of the Confederacy for the maintenance and extension of the magnificent Hindu Empire they had built: the people of Maharashtra to enjoy the national triumph they had so deservedly earned: the bards and the minstrels to compose and sing to stirring tunes the glories of

their sires and the no less glorious and mighty deeds of their sons in accents which even today draw tears of joy and set nerves tingling with heroic emotions whenever listened to. the veteran standing erect amidst admiring groups of villagers and citizens in public places, slowly twisting his mustaches, as he listened to the recitals of the fresh ballads telling the story of Khurda to eager crowds, at the mention of his personal or regimental exploits: the peasant proprietor singing happy songs over his plough, confident that no harm could come to him or the fruits of his labour as long as Nana ruled at Poona: temples proudly raising their fearless heads, to which devotees in their thousands brought their offerings and conducted their worship as freely and as variously as they chose: the pilgrim and the sanyasin and the saint and the philosopher from Haridwar to Rameshwar to think or to pray as pleased him best carrying and diffusing broadcast the highest moral precepts as he passed through the land: the savant and the scholar carrying on their studies in flourishing colleges and monasteries relieved from all cares of the necessaries of life through the liberality of the rich chiefs who spent millions in encouraging ancient learning and shastras: the sailor and the soldier each relating his deeds of valour by land and by sea to his young sweetheart or doting mother, displaying his share of booty carried home from the hostile camps or ships in pearls and in gold to substantiate his tale:

the capital, the town, the village,—let us leave the whole nation to enjoy the fruits of independence and national greatness which the labour of generations of their sires have so deservedly won. Imagination itself loves to linger on that pinnacle of glory, although it knows that it must be but for a while and although it is prepared to face the abrupt fall which is soon to be the fate of this great Hindu Empire: let it rejoice over it while it lasts.

In the meanwhile, let us review this sketch which we have so summarily drawn of the modern history of Maharashtra with a view to appraise, correlate and fit it in the long and noble History of Hindustan, of which it forms an organic and important chapter.

PART II

A. SYNTHETIC REVIEW

"Go, Freedom, whose smiles we shall never resign,
Go, tell the invaders, the Danes,
'Tis sweeter to bleed for an age at thy shrine
Than to sleep but a minute in chains."

THOMAS MOORE

CHAPTER I

THE IDEAL

An all-India Hindu Empire under the hegemony of Maharashtra

" स्वामी हिंदुराज्यकार्यधुरंधरः राज्याभिवृद्धिकर्तेः तुम्हां लोकांचें आंगेजणीनें पावलें. संपूर्ण हिंदुस्थान निरुपद्रव राहे तें, संपूर्णदेशदुर्ग हस्तगत करून, वाराणशासि जाऊन, श्रीविश्वेश्वर स्थापना करितात "॥

रामचंद्रपंत अमात्य

OUR motive in undertaking the review of Maratha history was to bring out prominently, from a general conusion of details, those events which, when cogently arranged, were most likely to enable us better to appraise and appreciate the value of the modern history of Maharashtra from a Pan-Hindu point of view and to correlate and fit it in the comprehensive whole—the History of the Hindu Nation itself—of which the first forms but a chapter, however glorious and momentous in itself it be. Therefore, it was necessary to narrate as briefly as possible the story of the Maratha movement and to ascertain the source, the spring, the motive power that propelled a whole people like that to struggle, and strive, and sacrifice, till they built a mighty Hindu Empire. As the first part of this history is better

known outside Maharashtra, and even better appreciated than the latter one which roughly may be taken to open from the rise of Balaji Vishvanath and the formation of the Confederacy, and as scholars, like Ranade, had already done justice to the period it covered by presenting the activities of Shivaji's and Rajaram's generations in their true aspect, we have but very cursorily referred to a few events in that period and dealt in our sketch more fully—though not at all exhaustively—with the second part of the Maratha History, since it ceased to be *Maratha* History proper and assumed such magnitude as to cover and get essentially identified with Indian History itself.

In reviewing the story from a Pan-Hindu standpoint and in our effort to ascertain the principles that animated it from generation to generation, we have, so far as necessary, tried to let the actors and thinkers who led that movement to speak for themselves and their motives. Although these mighty generations were so absorbed in solid deeds, breathlessly busy at the hammer and anvil, forging the destiny of a nation, as to be very laconic in words, and although their deeds spoke their message more eloquently than mere words could do, yet even their words, few though they be sounded as mighty and expressive as their deeds. With the help of these together, we tried to prove that the main theme of that great epic, the burden of that mighty song, the great Ideal which animated the whole movement and inspired the generations, not only of Shivaji

and Ramdas, but essentially even those that followed them to a monumental national achievement, was the liberation of Hindudom from the political and religious shackles of the Non-Hindu alien domination; and the establishment of a powerful Hindu Empire that should serve as a bulwark and an unassailble tower of strength to the Hindu civilization and the Hindu Faith against the attempts of alien aggression or fanatical fury. From the SWADHARMA RAJAYA, स्वधर्मराज्य dreamt of by Shahaji, the 'Hindavi Swarajya' which, at the very outset of this sketch,—the great Shivaji assured his comrades to be his devoted goal, down to the HINDU-PAD-PADASHAHI of Baji Rao and the triumphant assertion of the talented envoy Govindrao Kale in 1795 A. D.—"It is a land of the Hindus— हे इन्दुस्थान् आहे and not a land of the Turks-तुर्कास्थान्नव्हे"—we find this noble conception, this living ideal of a Hindu Empire dedicated to the service of the Deva and Dharma, of Righteousness and God throbbing and pulsating throughout the mighty movement. The fundamental principle of liberty, spreading out its eagle wings of SWADHARMA and SWARAJYA', sits hatching and brooding over a century, and a mighty people sprang up into existence to act out its will.

A People : not a man or two, not even a generation: but a Nation and this is the second and most important fact that our sketch convincingly reveals and

which we wish to impress on the minds of our non-Maratha readers. Although this War of Hindu liberation was initiated by the generation of Shivaji and Ramdas, yet it did not cease with them, but was carried on to its logical and triumphant termination by the generations that followed them. The theme of the great national epic evolves, as we proceed, in heroic magnificence and vastness of effects as great characters men and women, statesmen and warriors, diplomats and heroes, kings and king-makers, swordsmen and penmen, pass crowding in thousands and tens of thousands and the action thickens on the ever-widening stage of centuries, all concentrated round the one Jari Patka, the Golden Geruwa, the standard of Hindudom.

This fact, considered along with the peculiar political organisation into which the Maratha state soon instinctively got itself transformed as a national confederacy, owning a national commonwealth, convinces us that the Maratha movement was not only a non-personal and national movement but a great advance towards the evolution of political thought and practice in Indian life. For, in the modern history of India there is no example on such a vast scale as that wherein a confederated nation succeeded in rearing up and maintaining so long an Empire which, to all intents and purposes, was a real Commonwealth and a national commonwealth in which the principle of personal rule was so little in evidence and the

theory and practice of a national commonwealth so effectively inspired the actors with oneness of life and interests, and all constituents had duties, responsibilities, rights, so well marked as the Maratha Confederacy. People who are trained to confederated national rule can step on to a Republican United States more easily and efficiently than those accustomed to a rule personal in theory and practice. The second example of a confederated national state, in our modern history, was that of our Sikhs : but it was on a relatively much smaller scale, was more informal, and could not last so well and so long. But as that, too, was inspired by principles and ideals similarly patriotic and noble, it deserves an honourable mention as another important example of a confederated Hindu power.

But in emphasising this national and Pan-Hindu feature of the Maratha movement, facts as revealed by our sketch would not justify us in assuming that therefore all of the actors, at all times, were inspired in their actions by public good or Pan-Hindu interests alone. Civil feuds and civil wars were constantly going on, side by side with the noble activities of the nation in the defence and propagation of the Hindu cause. The fact is that, as the Marathas were Hindus first and Marathas afterwards, they therefore naturally shared to some extent the essential virtues and vices, the strength and the weakness of the general and particular temperament of the race

they belongd to. At the time of the first inroads of the Muhammadans, the fierce unity of Faith, that social cohesion and valorous fervour which made them as a body so irresistible, were qualities in which the Hindus proved woefully wanting. This is not a place to discuss the relative weakness and strength of the parties as they stood in the days of, say, Prithviraj and Muhammad Ghori; but still it must be clearly mentioned that in whatever manner the absolute merits or demerits of a militant church be judged from the point of view of expansion of political and religious conquests, the community that is out for the propagation of their faith and is taught in the fierce doctrines of believing all other religions as passports to hell and all efforts to root out these satanic strongholds by force or fraud as highly meritorious is, other things equal, better fitted to fight and vanquish its opponents and rule over them when opposed to a community which belongs not to a militant church at all, condemns the use of force, nay, going further, would not like to receive back into its fold even those who were forcibly carried away from its bosom, which prizes individual worship much more than a public one and thus develops no organ nor organisation for a common defence of their faith as a church and which, lacking thus in the cohesion and the public strength that it engenders, fails to replace it by any other principle like love for the common motherland, or common race, or a common kingdom, or a

state powerful enough to weld them all into an organic whole and render them dedicated to its defence and glory with as fierce a fervour as their opponents put forth. The Muhammadans, when they came, found a source of irresistible strength in the principle of theocratic unity, indissolubly wedded to a sense of duty to reduce all the world to a sense of obedience to a theocracy, an Empire under the direct supervision of God. The Hindus, wedded to individual liberty and philosophic views of life and the ultimate cause of causes, fallen a prey to the most decentralising and disabling institutions and superstitions, such as, the one that prevented them from crossing their frontiers and thus threw them always on the defensive and whose political organisations were more personal than patriotic, had naturally from a national point of view degenerated into a congeries of small states, bound together but very loosely by a sense of a common civilization, were more conscious of the differences that divided them provincially, sectionally and religiously, than of the factors that bound them and marked them out as one people. So in spite of some frantic attempts to unite under a Hindu banner, they fell one by one before the first assault of fanatical fury and valorous greed. As an individual to an individual, the Hindu was as valorous and devoted to his Faith as a Moslem. But community to a community, peopla to a people, the Muhammadans were fiercely united by a theocratic patriotism that

invited them to do or die under the banner of their God and invested every effort to spread their political rule over the unbelievers with the sanctity of a holy war. But as years and even centuries rolled by, the Hindus too learnt the bitter lesson and, under the pressure of a common danger, became more conscious of those ties that united them as a people and marked them out as a nation than the factors that divided them. They too began to feel as Hindus first and everything else afterwards and sadly realised the weakness that had crept into their national life by an inherent tendency to isolated thought and action, a general lack of community of feeling and pride and national sympathy. Slowly they absorbed much that contributed to the success of the Muhammadans. A Pan-Hindu movement was set on foot and struggle for political independence and founding of a great Hindu Empire was carried on. Studying all these movements and the political situation of the Hindu world as it existed then, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that Maharashtra alone was best fitted to take the lead in the War of Hindu Liberation and carry it to success. That was what Rāmdas asserted when, on his return from an all-India tour, he painfully and yet hopefully declared: "Throughout this Hindustan there was no Hindu left so powerful and so willing as to deliver this land and this nation from the political bondage of the Moslems,—only some hope could still be cherished of Maharashtra alone."

With this conviction he and his school made it a point to first consolidate Maharashtra herself and then lead on their forces in a holy war for winning the Independence of all Hindustan and deliver their *Rajya* and *Dharma*, the Hindu temple and Hindu throne, from the foreign yoke by subduing all India to a consolidated and powerful Maratha Empire which, being dedicated to the Hindu cause, would serve as a defender of the Hindu Faith and a champion of the Hindu race. But in this attempt they could not and could not have eradicated at a stroke the denationalising tendencies of the Hindu race entirely either in Maharashtra or of course in Hindustan. All that they could do was to eradicate them to such an extent as to enable the patriotic impulses of the Hindus of Maharashtra on the whole to hold in check the lower instincts of the people that goaded them on to self-aggrandisement or to sacrifice their national and Pan-Hindu interests to their parochial private ends. That is why we find civil strife breaking every now and then in the Maratha history, but on the whole the nation as such at many a critical point succeeded in enabling their national, Pan-Hindu and patriotic instincts to have the better of their degrading tendencies and hold them in check if not eradicate them altogether. This Pan-Hindu spirit, this longing and capacity to deliver all Hindudom from the bondage of the foreign and unbelieving races, this patriotic fervour that could hold in check the lower selfish and

individualistic tendencies of their nature, or make them subserve the cause of their nation and their Faith which the Marathas rapidly developed and displayed, rendered them decidedly superior in all national qualities to the Muhammadans and pre-eminently fitted them amongst all other Hindu people to rear up and sustain a mighty Hindu Empire which, for the very reasons above indicated, could not but be a Maharashtra Empire.

For the Hindu-pad-padashahi which so indubitably inspired the efforts of the Maratha nation had, to be realisable at all under the circumstances, necessarily to be a Maharashtra-padashahi too. The Hindus could not have risen to be a great power and able to repulse the formidabale attacks of all the haters of the Hindu cause and maintained their independence unless they got themselves consolidated into a strong and enduring Empire, a Hindu-pad-padashahi. And there was, under the circumstances, no centre, no pivot, no mighty lever that could be used as an instrument in this gigantic task of uplifting the Hindu race from the political servitude into which they had sunk, other than the people of Maharashtra. In spite of the fact that they, too, though far more patriotic and public spirited than the Muhammadan's and far more united and politically willing and capable to fight the War of Hindu Independence than all other sections of their countrymen and co-religionists, still fell far short of ideal patriotism and public-

virtues, say, relatively to the English who therefore beat them in the long run. In spite of this fact the Marathas were right in insisting on keeping the strings of the Hindu movement in their own hands and in assuming themselves the insignia and office of a Hindu-pad-padashahi. They dared first, succeeded so well, sacrificed so much, and, judging from the circumstances under which they stood, were naturally justified in aiming to consolidate all Hindustan under their standard, in bringing all the scattered rays of Hindu strength into a focus and by subordinating all the Hindu principalities to their sceptre. They took upon themselves the responsibility of championing the Hindu cause. They must be held justified in doing so from a Pan-Hindu point, for as our sketch would show they proved themselves capable of championing it effecttively against all hostile attacks. Of course, had any other section of our Hindu people dared first and achieved results so mighty and then called upon Maharashtra to pay homage to it and forced her into subordination to their Hindu Empire, they would have, from a Pan-Hindu point, been equally justified. It mattered little whether the Hindu Empire, the Hindu-pad-padashahi, was a Rajput-padashahi or a Sikh or a Tamil or a Bengali or even a Kolarian one: it would have been entitled to equal honour and gratitude from us all so long as it championed the cause of Hindudom so well and so effectively by

welding all our people into a grand Hindu Empire even though controlled and led by its own province or caste or community.

CHAPTER II

THE BEST SOLUTION UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

"उपाधीचें काम ऐसें। कांहीं साधे कांहीं नासे—रामदास"

"कांहीं दिवस भयराहित सदोदित स्वराज्य चालविलें"

"दरिद्र अरकेपार जनांचें ज्यांनीं घालविलें"

"जलचर हैदर नबाब इंग्रज रण करतां थकले"

"त्यांनि पुण्याकडे तिलोकिले ते संपत्तिला मुकले"

BUT could it not have been more patriotic of the Marathas if they had been able to find out a better way to found a Hindu Empire by persuading all other Hindus, rather than coercing them to form a Commonwealth, a true Commonwealth into which the Marathas, the Bengalis, the Punjabis, the Brahmans and the Mahars, all ceased to be as such and remained only Hindus? Surely, it would have been immensely more patriotic. But had the Hindus been capable of being welded into such a political unity at a stroke, the Muhammadans would not have been able to cross the Indus at all. We must take the facts as they are and judge a people in the light of their environments. No nation, any more than an individual, can rise entirely above

their environments, or can help breathing the general atmosphere of their times. If any claim is made to an ideal excellence and perfection of the Hindu movement as led by the Marathas, this absolute supposition would be perhaps a fit rejoinder. But it would be a travesty of truth to put forward any such claim. The Marathas were men living amongst men: not angels living amongst angels. Therefore we have said they shared to some extent the political weaknesses common to all other Hindus and could not find a more patriotic way to compass their ends. Nor could any other Hindu section do it. Nay, none could do it even so well as the Marathas did. Secondly, to persuade others to a better mood depends as much on the skill of the person who persuades, as on the honesty of the purpose or moral sensitiveness of the person to be persuaded. Even had the Marathas taken only to persuation, would the others have allowed themselves to be pursuaded to lose voluntarily their individual existences as principalities and kingdoms in the name of Hindu-pad-padashahi, in which all equally shared the rights and responsibilities ? Where was this patriotic impulse to come from ? Amongst those Hindus whose petty thrones were often soaked in the blood of civil feuds before they could ascend them, who freely invited the Moslems and the English to decide their civil wars and would rather bow down to the Mogul who trampled upon their Vedas and broke their

images than to their brother? It is foolish to expect a people at this stage of political level and national integrity to rise at a bound to the height of political thought and feeling and practice, which is implied in such absolute supposition as that; and to blame only one amongst them for not doing that which none else of his generation could even conceive the probability of doing and especially the performance of which devolved at least as much on others as on himself, is not only unjust but even absurd. If the question of the blame of the failure of devising such an ideal and an etymologically precise Hindu Empire is to be discussed at all then it must be primarily shared by all Hindus alike: and secondly, more by those who could not succeed contributing even so much to the realisation of a Hindu-pad-padashahi and smashing down the fetters of the foreign and fanatical tyrants as the Marathas did.

And still, as it is, efforts to persuade other Hindu brethren to join hands in the great task of building up a Hindu power were not altogether wanting; nor were noble responses wanting from some of the noblest of our Rajputs, Bundelas, Jats, and other northern and southern Hindu comrades to such appeals. The sketch teems with such instances and having once collected and related these, all important details bearing out our general remarks in this section, we will not tire out our reader by needlessly quoting them over and over again.

Sufficient time and progress of political thought and training all round amongst the Hindus would have certainly, at least conceivably, brought about an expansion of the Maratha Confederacy into such a Pan-Hindu State, or even a Hindu Republic. As their Empire extended, the Maratha Confederacy had shown every sign of being so progressively elastic as to include under its folds several Non-Maratha Hindu States, small and great, from the Deccan and the north, and assigned to them a definite place in the imperial organisation with common rights and responsibilities in their Commonwealth : their attempts were often directed to invite the other Hindu states, too, to join hands with them on confederate basis, to form a great Hindu commonwealth. In fact, by the time of the death of Nana Fadnavis in 1800, almost all India was recovered by the Hindus and was held from Nepal to Travancore by Hindu princes more or less held together, controlled, and often led by the Maratha Confedercy. Had not a nation, so indisputably superior in national and patriotic virtues and skill and strength even to the Marathas and of course to other Indian sections as England was, come on the scene at a very inconvenient time, the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra that had well nigh become the Hindu Empire of Hindustan would have, with the great assimilative and expansive power they ever displayed, probably altogether ceased to be provincial and evolved into an organic and well-consolidated United

Hindu States or Indian Empire. As the Hindus especially the Marathas, and the Sikhs learnt all it had to teach from the bitter defeat that the Hindus suffered at the hands of the Muhammadans and succeeded in reforming and recasting their people and their nation so as to render all the peculiar weapons of the Moslems blunt against their armour, even so they would have soon assimilated all that was best in their European antagonists and, even as Japan did, rehabilitated their Empire in such wise as to beat back all European encroachments. The very fact that the Marathas had already detected one of the most important factors that contributed to the success of the Europeans and had nearly mastered the art of military drill and discipline as introduced by them and proved themselves quite capable of wielding those new weapons and even in manufacturing them as efficiently under such able leaders as Mahadaji Shindia, Bakshi and others, proved that the Maratha Confederacy, that had already nearly grown into a Hindu Empire, was quite likely to expand and assimilate all that was best in the Europeans, beat them even as they did the Moslems, and evolve into a United States of India, or more likely into a Hindu Empire based on the confederated Hindu states, as the German Empire had been on the German principalities.

But, as it is, we must leave all this speculation aside and deal with solid facts as revealed by history

and try to appraise and appreciate them by the standards of their time and the possibilities of their environments. Judged from this historical standard, we cannot blame any sections of the Hindus particularly for their failure to have established a Hindu Republic at a bound, and least of all blame the Marathas any more than we can blame Shivaji for not riding a motor car or Jaising for his failure to introduce a state-press to carry on a Pan-Hindu propaganda. Such a speculative blame must, if at all, be shared by all or by none. Taking into consideration, then, only the relative merits of the case, one realises that the Hindus as such were yet far from developing a Pan-Hindu sense so intensely as to render them willing to sacrifice their individual, parochial or provincial exsistence altogether and entirely to the Hindu cause. Bearing also in mind the fact that the Marathas themselves, in spite of the relatively more consolidated public life and more intense national spirit that they developed as a people and in spite of their being passionately devoted and dedicated to the great and holy cause of delivering the Hindu Race and the Hindu Faith from the political bondage of alien fanaticism, were naturally far from nationalistic or Pan-Hindavi perfection though steadily and even rapidly progressing towards it; and finding, after a careful analysis of the relative strength of the different Hindu states or peoples in all Hindustan, that of all the scattered centres of Hindu life the only nucleus

round which the forces of Hindu revival could rally and offer resistance to the mighty foreign foes with some chance of success was to be discovered in Maharashtra alone, we cannot, even from the Pan-Hindu point of view, help justifying the tenets and efforts of Ramdas and Shivaji's generation to rally all Maharshatra under the banner of Hindu Faith to create first a Maratha kingdom strong and independent to serve as a basis, as a powerful lever for the uplift of the Hindu race, and then to extend the War of Hindu Liberation beyond the frontiers of Maharashtra, beyond the Narmada to Attock in the north and beyond the Tungabhadra to the seas in the south, and consolidating all the scattered centres of Hindu strength, as they advanced in extending the frontiers of the Maharashtra kingdom, to get it ultimately identified with the Indian Empire itself as the most efficient and practical way of achieving the liberation of all Hindudom and of establishing a Hindu-pad-padashahi.

Proceeding on this design, the only one that, under these cricumstances had some chance of success and one which now stands vindicated by events and the results achieved, it was inevitable that at times the Marathas had to encounter bitter opposition from some of the Hindu people and States. Of these some were grown so callous and insensible to the fetters they wore—fetters riveted by Moslem power—that they actually prided themselves on them. They

would not mind calling themselves dependents and tributaries, subjects or even slaves of the Moslem, of this Nabob or that, of the Nizam, or the big padasha at Delhi, but would not tolerate any proposal on the part of the Marathas to pay fealty to the Hindu Empire that stood before their eyes warring for the rights and honour of the Hindu race. They had to thank but themselves for the chastisement they received at the hands of the Maratha horsemen who naturally looked upon them as allied to the Moslems, and did not cease teasing them, till they were coerced into acknowledging the sovereignty of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra, or till their Moslem ruler became a tributary to it. But some of those of our brethren who opposed the Marathas were not so dead to appeals of the Pan-Hindu movements, but were as anxious as the Marathas themselves to root out the alien and recover the lost independece of the Hindus. But they could not understand why the Marathas alone should arrogate to themselves the right of leading this War of Hindu Liberation and insist on the submission all other Hindus to their Empire. Why should not they, some of the Non-Maratha Hindu princes and peoples have argued themselves to try to get themselves acknowledged as the paramount Hindu power in India ? The ancestors of a few of them were amongst those who championed the cause of Hindudom in the worst days that ever befell their nation. The decline of the Mogul

Empire invited them all equally to carve out a Hindu kingdom, great in proportion to the abilities. of each. The Marathas were trying to the carve out one for themselves why should they not try to do the same ? Their claim was just: nor was the claim of the Marathas unjust. From a Pan-Hindu point of view every one of them had equal right, nay, owed even a duty to strike the Moslem as best as he could and, failing to found a powerful, one, and invincible Hindu Empire, at least try to carve out as many Hindu kingdoms, small or great, as possible. But when the question of consolidating them all into one Empire arose, they could not, under those peculiar political environments and at that stage of national and Pan-Hindu spirit, help coming into conflict with each other, doubt each other's abilities, and even suspect each other's sincerity of purpose. The Marathas thought they had proved their right to lead the Hindu Empire by their national valour and splendid results: they as a people had doubtless achieved by maintaining, and by triumphantly maintaining, an uncompromising struggle against the Moslems and the Portuguese and the English and the French and all other enemies of the Hindu cause. But that was no reason, the others thought, why the Marathas should try to swallow the individual independence of other Hindu states by forcing them, when unwilling, to pay the blessed chowth as a token of their subordination. It was natural. Natural also it was for the Marathas who had achieved so much to

aspire to achieve more, sincerely believe, that in consolidating their power and building up a centralised empire alone, the hope of maintaining the independence and the political and civil existence of the Hindus as a nation and a Faith lay : and as consolidation necessarily meant the reduction, submission and sacrifice, willing or forced, of all constituents to the dictates and interests of the supreme and sovereign constitution, the highest interests of Hindudom demanded the subordination of all Hindus to the Maratha Empire which, of all other Hindu sections, was the only organised state that could, as in fact it well nigh did, establish and maintain a Hindu-pad-padashahi. They thought, having championed the cause of the Hindu race and the Hindu Dharma so valorously and inflicted such severe chastisements on the alien foes, it was their right, and felt they possessed the might, too, to lead and not to surrender the mastery of the Hindu Empire they had so bravely built. The others naturally questioned their right even though, and even after, they realised that they lacked the might to dare and do what the Marathas had done and rearing up so great a Hindu power to repulse the worst attacks of alien assailants. Under these circumstances the only way to decide who deserved to lead the Hindu Empire was a trial of strength, and so now and then a conflict between the Marathas and some Hindu States and peoples who were themselves trying to carve out Hindu kingdoms and so far were, from a

Pan-Hindu point of view, to be congratulated upon their efforts, became inevitable. All movements for national consolidation and great political unions must needs face this regrettable necessity to an extent inversely proportionate to the keenness of the desire for such national cohesion and the intensity of the patriotic fervour that counts no individual sacrifice too great in the furtherance of the national cause.

Let us take the case of the Marathas themselves. The petty Hindu Zamindars, chiefs and princes, that ruled in subordination and vassalage to the Moslem kings in Maharashtra, were naturally tenacious of their relative freedom, and some of them were even cherishing an ambition just like the Bhosles to shake off Moslem fetters and establish themselves as independent Hindu princes. Those who did not like to bestir themselves or to be disturbed even by others out of their slavish ease and canine comforts of bondage, as well as those high-spirited souls who aimed to smash down that bondage for themselves, rose in anger against Shivaji and his brave band and opposed their efforts to rally all the Marathas and establish a united and powerful Hindu kingdom of Maharashtra. They questioned the sincerity of Shivaji, very naturally attributed his constant appeals to the necessity of national consolidation and Hindu unity to secret ambition of the Bhosles for personal aggrandisement under the cloak of liberating the Hindus and winning the independence of Maharashtra

Some of them pointedly asked why Bhosale should expect subordination from them, why, if Shivaji's intention was really the establishment of a Hindu Empire should they he, not acknowledge them as his superiors which in social status they doubtless were, and crown them as Chatrapati? The mean and the slavish did not scruple to invite or join the forces of other Moslems themselves in meeting the arrogant challenge of the Hindu upstart. Those who were not so degraded, but doubted honestly either the capacity or the justice of Shivaji's claim to arrogate to himself the leadership of the movement, chose the less objectionable course of fighting out their battles against him themselves. Thus rose the necessity of unsheathing his sword at times against the Hindus themselves, and history cannot but acquit Shivaji of any special blame attaching to him or, for the matter of that, dare to take away the credit of being the foremost champion of the Hindu race, the defender of the Hindu Faith and the builder of the nation and the kingdom of the Maratha people. National interests demanded the reduction of all petty chiefs into an united and national state. If the other Hindu chiefs wanted to do that, well they could have risen in rebellion against the common foe, dared as Shivaji did, achieved what he accomplished, and founded a strong and united Maharashtra kingdom before he rose, rendering it superfluous for him to do it, or even in spite of him, thus proving their superiority to him as nation-

builders:—and Hindu history would have justified them too, as it now does Shivaji and his associates. But as all other Maratha chiefs and persons, whether through their fault or not, failed to do that, they ought to have allowed Shivaji to do it for them and in thrusting on him the responsibilities and the risks of the national movement, they ought to have also relinquished in his favour the right of placing himself at its head and even to get him crowned as the king of all Maharashtra : who else in national interests should be a king but he who could be a 'king'—the *Koning*—the able man !

What acquits Shivaji of any special responsibility or guilt for facing the inevitable, though regrettable, necessity of at times unsheathing his sword against some of his Maratha brethren themselves or Ranjitsing for reducing the several Sikh misals and coercing them into submission towards him, acquits the Maratha Confederacy, too, for forcing many a recalcitrant Hindu chief to submission to their Empire. It must again be clearly pointed out that a few of those Hindu chiefs, though not all, cannot also be blamed for their opposition to the Maratha claim of soverignty. For they too were, taking into consideration the general level of political and Pan-Hindu thought as well as their own ambitions to carve out independent Hindu kingdoms for themselves, naturally and rightly tenacious of their individual independence. But as the very existence of the Hindus as a race, as a civilisation,

as a faith, and as a nation, depended on the establishment of a powerful, consolidated and Pan-Hindu Empire, whether it be monarchical or confederate, autocratic or plutocratic, Bengali or Rajputi, Tamilian, or Telugu, but a Pan-Hindu and centralized and mighty empire, the Marathas who alone of all Hindu people could vanquish the foes of Hindudom and found and maintain that Empire, must be absolved from any special guilt or responsibility for using at times force against the Hindus themselves. The responsibilities, as we said, must be shared either by all Hindus alike or by none: at any rate not by the Marathas alone. Their fitness to lead the War of Hindu Liberation and establish a mighty Hindu Empire gave them the right to expect all other Hindus to forego their individual ambitions and interests and submit and if recalcitrant to be forced to submit—to its suzerainty.

CHAPTER III

VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND MODERN

"ज्या प्रकारें वानरा करवीं लंका घेवविली त्याप्रकारें हे गोष्टआली. सर्व कृत्यें ईश्वरावतारासारखी आहेत. जे सेवक हे पराक्रम पडात आहेत त्यांचे जन्म धन्य आहेत. जे कामास आले त्यांनीं तो हा लोक आणि परलोक साधिला.

हे तर्तुद, हे मर्इमकी या समयांत हे हिंमत ! ही गोष्ट मनीं-हि कल्पवते नाहीं ! "

ब्रह्मेंद्र स्वामीचा पत्र व्यवहार.

THAT is the reason why our ancestors not only justified but actually sanctified the institution of Chakravartitva, of the right of a Hindu conqueror of all other states to hold the reins of sovereignty and wear the crown of all Hindustan. In spite of many and obvious drawbacks and dangers attendant on it, that institution served as one of the effective means which under those environments our forefathers could find to develope slowly a national organisation that could train all Hindudom into political solidarity and oneness of public life. It always brought forward the best man, the best organisation, the best people best fitted to lead the Hindu nation forced all mediocrities to restrain their blustering ambitions from aiming beyond their worth to the detriment of national interests and entrusted the defence and the leadership of the realm to the strongest and the best-fitted man his times could produce. It rallied the moral forces of the nation to the side of the most capable and demanded as a national duty submission to him from the incapable, but vainly ambitious recalcitrant, element in the society whose claim to the leadership of the realm rested on no other ground than the dubious one of heridity or sheer malice. Accordingly the centre of the political power of the Hindus shitted

from province to province from Hastinapore to Pataliputra, from Pataliputra to Ujjain from Ujjain to Pratishthan, from Pratishthan to Kanouj, and so on, as fitness and public and organised capacity to defend the Hindu Empire against all attacks alien dictated from time to time. Whenever national exigency demanded formation of a strong empire, the moral forces of the Hindu people instinctively rallied round the banner of a Hindu *world-conqueror* and not only condoned his fighting with and vanquishing all other Hindu rivals to that honour, but actually hailed it as the only test practicable under the circumstances to hit upon the best candidate to whom they could safely entrust the preservation and defence of their land and people. Nor did they look down on those also who challenged him in the field before they acknowledged his right to suzerainty over them. Harsha could not consolidate his empire in the north, nor Pulkeshin in the south, without forcing into submission their mutual rivals, even if they too were Hindus like them, sometimes their castemen or actually their blood relations. We condemn not these latter, for it was but human, nay, in the absence of any other higher motive, even manly, that they did not surrender their individuality for the mere asking of it. But for the matter of that, we surely do not hestitate to acknowledge the grand national services that Harsha and Pulkeshin rendered by succeeding in the establishment of two such great and mighty Hindu Empires imparting solidarity of

political thought and life to the Indian people. Nay, later on when Harsha and Pulkeshin both came to measure their swords against each other, we from the Pan-Hindu point of view watch the struggle with parental impartiality and tolerate the sight of this internal fight even as a gymnast or a general tolerates, as a necessary evil, the combat between his own disciples or tournament parties with a view to train them and find out the best of them who could safely be trusted to face the hostile camp when and if the time comes. If India and our Hindudom have developed any national instinct, any feeling that we in spite of all divisions are a people essentially one, sharing a common blood,a common sacred language, a common polity, philosophy; institutions, and thought, it is doubtless chiefly due to these great empires that were fostered by that institution of Chakravartitva and which, as they shifted their centres from Kashmere to Kanouj and Pataliputra, to Kanchi and Madura and Kalyan, carried with them to and fro the different currents of our provincial lives and intermingling fused them all into a mighty national stream. It is for this service that we prize all these ancient empires in our history and reckon both those who were valorously vanquished and those who valorously won, Harsha and Pulkeshin are the cherished names of our history and we pride ourselves on the achievements of the empires of the Magadhas or of the Andhras or of the Andhra Bhrityas or of the Rashtrakutas

or of the Bhojas or of the Pandyas, even though none of them could rise into big Hindu states unless they subjugated some lesser Hindu states to their rule and altogether absorbed others, without waiting to hackle them as to why they failed to find out a better and more patriotic way to such political amalgamation, even when we know that their empires had to subjugate and rise at the cost ofthose very provinces which we to-day happen to recognise as our provincially separate localities. The Maratha movement, too, for identical reasons, for having succeeded in rearing up a Hindu Empire largerand stronger than any of those ancient ones and at the cost of far less amount of civil blood shed in civil fueds and wars, is entitled to the same amount of respect, admiration and honour from us, Hindus, irrespective of our province or creed or caste.

Nay, more. For, as the national urgency that propelled the Maratha movement was far more pressing, the moral justification from a Pan-Hindu standard for these efforts and wars and conquests must also be far nobler than a Harsha or a Pulkeshin could claim. It was not a mere zeal or a lust of conquest that made them draw their sword. It was not only the glory of being a Chakravartin that made them subjugate others to their rule. It was the question of the very existence of the Hindus as a nation—as a Faith. The northern bard's tribute—" काशीजीकी कला जाती.

मथुरा मशीद होति, शिवाजीन होते तो सुनत होत सबकी "—is no empty eulogy. Recentness sometimes strips an event of grandeur and hallowedness that, if remote, would have invested it with a sanctified halo. Otherwise the services rendered to the Hindu cause by the Maratha Confederacy are no less important in nature and far more superior in magnitude than those rendered by our ancient Hindu warriors, either in the glorious days of Vikram or of Salivahan or of Chandragupta himself. Though the empire of Chandragupta was undoubtedly the most glorious and might that our post-Pandaviya history records, yet the national danger which it had actually to ward off was far less serious and the means it had at its disposal far more effective than in the case of the Maratha movement. Foreign histories talk glibly of Alexandar's Indian conquest. But in fact it means only the conquest of the Punjab. The centre of Hindu strength at Pataliputra remained unhit though supine. The genius of Chanakya and the strength of Chandragupta forced Nanda to abdicate for his failure to drive Mlechhas out, took upon themselves the imperial burdens and with the resources of this empire at their command ably drove away the Greeks from the Indian soil. But compared to this, how difficult was the task the Marathas had to undertake, how gigantic the contrast of the dreadful magnitude of the danger and the poverty of the means they had to face! all India lay trampled under the feet of the

Moslem, the Portuguese and several other alien and powerful foes for centuries : all virility and even hope squeezed out of it : demoralisation born of constant defeats fed itself on the vitals of the nation till it grew into a superstition that the Mogul Emperor was born to rule and possessed a divine right to do so : the sword literally broken, the shield literally torn : and yet they rose, yet they fought and yet they won in a contest the like of which the Hindus as a nation were never called upon to confront. The Huns and the Sakas, though they had penetrated further in India than the Greeks had done, yet never rose into such formidable foes and never could subdue all India to their rule. Even when a Toraman or a Rudradaman ruled, the national civilization, the essence of a national life, was not assailed with such perilous and fatal hostility as Moslem or Portuguese fanaticism did. The valour and the patriotic fervour and sacrifice that defended our land and our nation from the attacks of the Huns and the Sakas were glorious indeed and deeply are we indebted to those our national heroes and warriors and statesmen who not only freed our land from the hated yoke of the foreigners, but contributed so much to our national solidarity and strength by uniting all Hindudom under the, imperial standard of the Magadhas or the Malavas, under the sceptre of a Chandragupta or Vikramaditya or Salivahan. Every patriotic Hindu, irrespective of his province or caste, in spite of the fact that the-

empires they built had necessarily to subdue and subjugate the provinces which he happens to own to-day as his own, in spite of the fact that perhaps they had to shed the blood of his own ancestors in those internicine wars that their "digvijayas" then necessarily implied, every patriotic Hindu, knowing full well that national interests demanded that these necessary evils must be tolerated as the only price that under those circumstances could secure to our nation the inestimable blessings of independence, of glorious peace, of invincible strength, bows down in reverence at the mention of their names and worships the memory of a Chandragupta, of a Pushyamitra, of a Samudragupta or Yashodarman, or the illustrious "grandson of Gautami" for having delivered this land from the political bondage of the Huns and the Sakas. Should not a Hindu bow down in reverence and deep gratitude at the mention of Shivaji and BajiRao, a Bhau, a Ramdas, a Nana, a Jankoji, and cherish with feelings of love and national pride the memory of that Empire which saved our Hindudom from a danger which, in magnitude and intensity, was so immensely more threatening than what Chandragupta or Vikrama had to face, a danger that almost spelt death, with means so hopelessly inferior to what those our ancient heroes had at their disposal and achieved results so glorious that, barring a couple of instances, no ancient empire recorded in our history can claim even to equal?

Even in these days of steam and electricity, even a Mazzini or a Garibaldi found it impossible to consolidate all Italy by moral propaganda alone. In spite of their high intentions of effacing all provincial dinstinctions and fuse all their people into one Italian kingdom, they could not dispense with means of relatively doubtful character. Neopolitans and Romans failed to understand why they should sacrifice their individual independence and identity for a vain cry of United Italy. When the King of Piedmont and other leaders like Garibaldi, Crispi, Cavour and others, all Piedmontese, went on deliberately annexing province after province to the Piedmontese empire, these provincialists naturally questioned the sincerity of their actions and professions. They did not mind the yoke of Austria or France, so immured they had grown to it, but, as slaves are generally wont to do, could not tolerate the idea of obeying and acknowledging one of their equals as superior to them, as their master. So even for the sake of Italian unity Garibaldi, Victor Emmanul and others had to fight, not only with the foreigners, but with the Italians themselves. But history absolves them of any guilt of fratricide and all Italy to-day, including the sons of those very Neopolitans and Romans whom they vanquished in war, takes off her hat in utter reverence and kneels down in gratitude and love at the mention of those makers of Italy. As that very King of Piedmont was later on recognised as the king of Italy, so

also, time and circumstance favouring, the King of the Marathas was almost destined to be formally crowned as the Emperor of India which in fact he virtually had been. Vishvasrao was even reported, by friends and foes alike, to have been proclaimed by Bhau as the Emperor of India. The history of the modern German states and their Independence and Unification affords a nearer parallel to the probable development of the Indian politics in the Maratha period, which approached so near fulfilment into a confederated empire of the Hindu princes with the King of the Marathas as their Emperor. As the Italian kingdom of Piedmont, as the German Empire of Prussia, even so the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra constitutes, in spite of civil feuds, a national and Pan-Hindu achievement, for which every Hindu patriot must be grateful feeling proud of the memory of those who worked and fought and died in its cause.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANS: MARATHA WARFARE

“आपणांस रारवून गनीम घ्यावा. स्थकास गनिमाचा बेहा पडला तों रोज झुंजुनस्थळं जतन करावें. निदान येऊन पडलें तरि परिच्छिन्न वारवा होऊन लोंकीं मरावें. पण सत्ता देऊन, स्थळ देउन, जीव वांचातिला असें सर्वथा न घडावें”

राजाज्ञा

"ऐसें अवर्घेची उठत्रां । परदळाची कायशी चिंता
हरिणें पळती उठतां चित्ता । चहूंकडे "

रामदास.

We have said at the outset in our sketch that the new era that the birth of Shivaji introduced into the modern history of our Hindu race, so momentous and so triumphant, was doubtless due as much to the great spiritual and national Ideal which Shivaji and his spiritual preceptor Ramdas placed before our race, as to the new strategical methods the Marathas introduced into the battlefield. We believe the records of events, even as cursorily reviewed by us, has convincingly borne out the proposition that the Maratha warfare was as truly an addition to the science of war as it was in vogue amongst the Indians, as the Maharashtra Dharma was a force animating the dying spirit of the Hindu race. It of course suited Shivaji's circumstances best and was perhaps a natural outcome of them. But even the generations that followed Shivaji found it so peculiarly adapted to their genius and so flexible, that they used it with singular effect against their foes, even when they marched at the head of armies, instead of a few bands of revolutionists as Shivaji had to do in the first days of his career. The military tactics of their great leaders were gradually adopted and extended to the movements of larger masses by the succeeding

Maratha generals and, as our sketch shows from page to page, used so effectively as to render it hopeless for their foes to face them and to avoid them. The Maratha cavalry dispersed in all directions in the presence of a superior enemy and observed him from neighbouring hills or woods. Their opponents generally took the movement as a sign of cowardice and hesitation to face them and kept exultingly marching on till they were lured into a difficult position and sometimes occupied the very ground the Marathas had actually chosen for them. Then suddenly the Marathas rallied together, closing their ranks as deftly as they dispersed them, and fell like a thunderbolt on their devoted prey, and crushed their foes before they could realise it all. Whenever they chose to fight they fought with such dogged bravery as to strike terror into the hearts of their foes : the battle that Hambirrao gave, the battle at the Chat of Badau and several other actions reveal the valorous tenacity of the Maratha warriors which rendered as dangerous for the Moslem to face the Maratha in a pitched battle when he chose it as to force him to give battle when he chose it not.

The tactics of war and the theory of sacrifice that inspired them were based on the principle of **शक्तिनें मिळती राज्यें युक्तिनें यत्न होतसे (रामदास).** Righteous war they worshipped : for without war neither Independence nor kingdom could be won. Sacrifice, unstinted valour, even Tanaji—like, were

their pre-eminent qualities that made them masters of Hindustan. But skill they placed above valour which without it was brutal. Sacrifice was adorable only when it was, directly or remotely, but reasonably, felt to be indispensible for success. Sacrifice that leads not to ultimate success is suicidal and had no place in the tactics of Maratha warfare. कातर्यं केवला नीतिः शौर्यं श्वापदचेष्ठितम् was that theme when Ramdas preached शक्तियुक्ति जयें डायीं तथें श्रींमत नांदती. They were always eager to devise such ways as to inflict in the long run more losses on the enemy than they themselves incurred. So calculating, and yet so reckless when the hour came, when recklessness at the moment meant caution in the long run, the Marathas avoided pitched battles, but once they entered into one, deathless was their opposition.

They first kept hanging and whirling round their foes ready to cut off solitary foremen or suprise small parties in ambush. If pursued they would disperse. When the pursuers gave up the useless chase, in a minute they were upon them. These tactics they employed on such vast scales when they commanded divisions that, instead of interrupting and despatching few stragglers, they despatched or captured whole armies of the enemy. The campaig. . of Holkar and Patwardhan against the English in the first Anglo-Maratha war show how successfully the Marathas extended and adopted the military tactics of their

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illustrious master down to the days of Nana Fadnis and Mahadaji Shinde.

Another important feature of their warfare was the care they generally took to throw the enemy on the defensive as soon as war broke out. Thus, they would generally be the first to invade, taking good care to cover their country and force the hostile territory to undergo the devastations of war. They would march to and fro avoiding battle, cutting off supplies of food and spreading a general panic in the subjects of the enemy which sooner or later was sure to upset the mental vigour of his soldiers and demoralise them. The consequent disorder ended in cessation of all regular Government, in scarcity, and famine. While on the one hand they hampered and harassed their foe, they levied heavy contributions of war, freely assessed revenue on their own account and thus forced the enemy to maintain not only his army but also the army of his opponents. The enemy could never avoid them nor face them. He exclaimed in despair: 'To fight with these Marathas is to battle with the wind, is to strike on water." The best example of these tactics is Raghoji's campaigns in Bengal. We have shown how year in and year out he harassed the realms of the impudent Moslem ruler of Bengal till he was forced to surrender, hand over Orissa and became tributary to the Hindu power.

This campaign would show that it is not correct to say that, although those tactics of devastating

enemies' land and realm were justifiable in Shivaji's days, they were doing nothing but plundering in the days of the Peshwas as they could have maintained their armies out of their regular revenue. For, first of all such a warfare was practised as a recognised weapon of war by all nations alike especially in those days. Moslems, fighting against the Moslems or the Hindus, freely resorted to it. The Portuguese, the English and all other nations whether in Asia or Europe, deemed it necessary to levy contributions of war on those hostile towns and territories which they succeeded in occupying. Secondly, the Marathas who had to fight simultaneously several foes, the majority of them aliens, oppressors and aggressors, could not have, and even if they could, should not have maintained vast armies simultaneously engaged in campaigns so far from their base at Poona, as, the Punjab on one side and Arcot on another; should not have abandoned these tactics, for it was a most effective weapon in their hand which hitting the very sinews of war of their foes, brought him to his knees sooner than otherwise.

It is this feature of the system of Maratha warfare which their enemies have often dubbed as loot or reckless plunder. As far as this hackneyed, and at times intested, charge is concerned, apart from the military principle that is deemed as sufficient excuse in a Boer war, in a German war, in the annexations of Dalhousie and the campaigns of Neil in 1857, and which therefore one should expect to be an excuse

in the War of Hindu Liberation, too, especially when Aurangzeb, Tippu and Gulam Khader were to be dealt with—apart from that argument that every thing is fair in a war, or without citing the juster rule that everything is fair in a righteous war—we need waste no words beyond quoting the reply which the great Shivaji himself gave to his opponents once for all : " Your Emperor," wrote he, had forced me to keep an army for the defence of my people and my country, that army must be paid by his subjects." Even the English contemporary writers admit that "on his way as he goes he gives *kaul* (assurance) promising them that neither he nor his soldiers shall in the least do any wrong to any that obeys him which promise he hitherto kept." And we may add that similar promises given by the Maratha generals as a rule were as faithfully kept down to the days of the last war with the Nizam which ended in the glorious Maratha victory at Kharda in 1795.

It is true that, in such campaigns, often the Hindu subjects of the enemy suffered. We need not reiterate any more the reasons that led to these cruel necessities of war, that under such circumstances rendered it impossible to discriminate minutely, nor at times even advisable to descriminate thus. For, as the Moslems or other hostile people had to pay contribution as indemnity, so also the Hindus, too, who ought to have actively sided with the Marathas and yet remained supine, nay, even hostile to them

and would not pay for the national struggle and were therefore often made to pay it. It was a war-tax informally levied and collected from all Hindus for the maintenance of those armies of the Hindu Empire to whose valour alone they owed the existence of temples, race and civilization, and but for whose might they would have probably been converted perforce to Muhammadanism and ceased to be Hindus at all.

Of course we do not mean to condone any particular excesses that at times were committed by the Maratha soldiers here or there. But this also must be borne in mind that they were as nothing to those which were held as pardonable, nay, even at times advisable by the Moslems, Portuguese and other nations with whom the Marathas had to fight. They never forced even the very fanatical Maulvis who were guilty of converting Hindus perforce to non-Hindu faith to embrace Hinduism perforce, when they had the power to do so. They razed no mosques or churches to the ground, when they knew that their temples had been mercilessly pulled down to prove the might of Allah or the Lord—although they could have done so to vindicate the might of Shri Rama or Shri Krishna too. And so far as acts of vandalism and moral outrages were concerned, not even their worst enemies could attribute to them any wholesale butchery, or crimes against the honour of womanhood, or reckless and fanatical persecution,

burning of the sacred books of hostile faiths and the like. The levying of war contributions and rendering a country barren of all food and fodder as a necessary military step which went by the name of loot was all that even their enemies could allege against them. But how necessary a weapon it was under the circumstances could best be seen by the fact that the Marathas resorted to it even as regards to themselves when a foreign foe invaded their land. The campaign of Aurangzeb in Rajaram's time and the two attempts of the English to march against Poona failed so ignominoiusly, chiefly because the Marathas hesitated not to desert, devastate, and deprive their own territory of all food and fodder and even threatened to burn down their own capital, if ever the English succeeded in approaching it. That clearly shows that it was no sign of reckless hatred or disregard of the interests of their Hindu brethern in other parts of India, that made them take to the tactics of quartering their troops on the enemies, land and upset all peace and order and government in it thus to undermine all his supplies and revenues and even moral prestige and moral courage. This also continued as long as the war lasted, or the demands of the Marathas were not aquiesced in. But as soon as the province was regularly annexed or reduced to be a tributary to their Hindu Empire, their inroads ceased. Where the inhabitants had themselves invited the Marathas

to free them from Moslem or European bondage, or at least sympathised withthem when they came of themselves to wrest that province from the alien hands, it needs no mention that they treated the inhabitants of that province with as much lenity and love as possible.

Occasional excesses must be condemned. But it must be borne in mind that occasional excesses marked even the return of Garibaldi from Rome, marked every great revolutionary movement from the French Revolution to the Irish Sein Fein, from the American War of Independence to the War of German Liberation and Imperial Unification. As those excesses and civil feuds do not darken the essential grandeur of those brilliant national movements and render their noble and patriotic message doubtful, even so in spite of a few excesses here and there—so few compared to those committed on them by their foes,—or inevitable civil fueds, the movement that gathered up the standard of the Hindus from the dust of centuries of slavery and impotence, raised it in the teeth of mighty opposition of emperors and kings, of Shahis and Badshahis, and planted it on Attock, forcing those very Shahis and Badshahis to kneel and do homage to it—that movement and that Hindu Empire which it ushered into existence do not cease to be entitled to the loving and grateful tribute of every patriotic Hindu heart.

CHAPTER V

THE EMPIRE FOSTERS AN ALL ROUND HINDU REVIVAL

" शास्त्रेण रक्षिते राष्ट्रे शास्त्रचिंताप्रवर्तते "

ALTHOUGH the Hindu revival that was signalised by the rise of the Marathas had necessarily to assert itself first in the political and military spheres of Hindu life and create a powerful and national state, which must ever remain the *sine quo-non* of a nation's progress in all other departments of life, yet it did not fail to manifest itself in these as soon as the categorical imperative of national political independence was achieved under the aegis of the Maratha power. The Hindu Empire of Maharashtra initiated, patronised, financed and promoted several activities and reforms that were inspired by this revivalist movement amongst the Hindus. Assimilating much that was best in their adversaries, they strove to liberate and free all Hindu life from the grip of the killing overgrowth of the foreign influence. The Hindu languages all over India were well nigh dominated to suffocation by the invasion of Persian and Arabian influences. The State records were generally in Persian. But the Marathas as soon as they created a Hindu state ordered that State records must cease to be in Persian. Then they tried to purify their language, which but for their timely efforts must have by

this time succumbed to Arabic or Urdu as ignominiously as for example, the current literary language and even the script of the Punjab and Sindh did. But a National State revived the national language. A learned Pandit was commissioned to compose an authoritative dictionary called *Rajavyavaharokosha*,' wherein were col-ected and enlisted suitable equivalents, to all those alien Moslem words that had monopolised the political records and thoughts of that genera-tion. Public opinion too, was created, and encourag-ed against the use of alien words. The effect-of this campaign on the Maratha language was remar-kable. The political letters and despatches show much improvement and at times betoken studied attempts to boycott all alien words. While literature historical or political, poetical, or prose, grew slowly chastened, till we come to the *magnum opus* of Moropant's *Mahabharat*, in which monumental work one would hardly detect a dozen foreign words. The 'Bakhars' too, are no mean production. Nay, some of them write a Marathi which throbs with life and seems inimitable in its vigour and impressive simplicity. Political life made history living and the language of a generation whose time was almost wholly claimed by grand and mighty deeds, necces-sarily leaving little to spare for words, naturally devel-oped a laconic eloquence that remains the despair of our age which has to write history without making

it, to sing of valorous deeds without the daring abilities and opportunities that can actualise them in life.

Not only Marathi, but even Sanskrit, the sacred language of the Hindus, naturally received a great impetus under the Maratha rule. Ancient learning in all its branches, Vedas, Vedangas, Shastras, Puranas, Poetry, Astronomy and Medicine, all branches of Hindu literature revived. The dozen and more capitals, great and small, of the Hindu Empire, scatetered all over India, became centres of Hindu learning and patronised Hindu scholars and students, started and maintained colleges and schools in all parts of India. Moral education of the people was not neglected. Saints and Sadhus could go up and down freely under the protection of the Maratha arms from Rameshwar to Haridwar from Dwarka to Jagannath, preaching and teaching men and women the best principles of Hindu morals and Hindu philosophy and Hindu traditions. To maintain and help those and do what they wished, the great Kings and Viceroys and Governors and Generals of the Empire vied with each other. Great and organised agencies like the one founded by Ramdas had spread out a regular network of Marthas and convents throughout India, were financed by the Empire and served as so many centres, not only of religious but also of political propaganda. Besides all this, a yearly assembly of learned men, from all India, met in every Shravan in Poona, under

the patronage of the Peshwa himself whose regular examinations were held in all branches of Hindu learning, and prizes and degrees and endowments were distributed and conferred on the deserving candidates. No less than a hundred thousand rupees were spent yearly on this occasion alone in encouraging and rewarding Hindu learning. These gatherings served to unite and focus all the divergent currents of Hindu thought and moral forces—help to fuse them into a correlated whole, make them feel that they were, in spite of all divergence in creed and caste, Hindus united under one national banner that had vanquished the foes of Hindudom and floated triumphantly over the Hindu Empire, shielding and championing the cause of their faith and their country and their civilisation.

Works of public utility, too, received the special attention of the Peshwas and their vassals. If wealth flowed in tribute from Attock and Rameshwar to Poona, it did neither lie miserly hoarded there, nor was wantonly squandered away in dissolute luxuries, but eventually flowed back in most useful channels to tirthas and kshetras all over the land of Hindustan. There is no sacred river in India that owns not useful and beautiful ghats; no important ghat that is not adorned by a spacious Dharmashala or a towering and graceful temple; no famous temple that is not endowed with a rich donation, an inam or an allowance, and stands

not a witness to the generous munificence of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra. In spite of great and pressing military preoccupations, wars and rumours of wars, the people that inhabited the vast territories which were under the direct rule of that Empire from Ginji and Tanjore to Gwalior, and Dwarka to Jagannath, were far more lightly taxed and justly governed, enjoyed more peace and plenty, than those under any other Indian state. The roads, the postal system, the jail administration, the medical relief and departments of public utility, we have ample evidence before us to show, were in better state and more regularly conducted than they were in many other contemporary states. That the people on the whole appreciated the blessings of independence and in spite of occasional disorder, not only loved their government, but felt themselves intensely proud of their state and thankfully acknowledged their indebtedness to Him for being born in those glorious days, could best be seen by a perusal of the first-hand evidence of letters, poems, ballads, bakhars and other contemporary literature.

Nor were other far reaching and liberalising movements altogether wanting. Many a custom or superstition that hampered the political or social progress of the people was either rendered less rigid or altogether got rid of. Notable attempts were made to introduce reformed worship, intermarriages amongst

castes, to encourage seafaring habits, revive naval daring and strength, readmit those who crossed the seas, and had visited European shores or went beyond Attock, to effect reconversions of those who had been converted to the alien faith either through force or through fraud by the Christian or the Moslem. As regards the last movement interesting details have come to light that show that the Suddi movement was anticipated by our ancestors ever since the rise of the Maratha power. The Portuguese records tell us of occasional efforts of leading Brahmans to organise reconversions, when they secretly administered purificatory baths to those whom the Portuguese had forcibly converted, and readmitted them into the Hindu fold. On one of such occasions the Portuguese, having scented it suddenly, surrounded the secret assembly and dispersed them at the point of the bayonet, when a Gosavi earned the admiration even of these fanatical foes by his refusal to budge an inch till he was cut down. The case of Nimbalker,—a great Maratha sardar who was forcibly converted by the King of Vijapur who subsequently gave his daughter in marriage to the convert, but who, in spite of it all, escaped, joined the Maratha camp, was with the permission of the Pandits purified and taken back to the Hindu fold under the patronising direction of Jijabai, the illustraious mother of Shivaji, and to lay at rest all the misgivings of the orthodox element was allowed to marry his eldest son to the daughter of

Shivaji himself—is now well known. Another notable case is that of Netaji Palker. That brave Maratha commander who was respected as a second Shivaji, falling in the hands of the Moguls, was taken to the frontiers and forced to live amongst the ferocious tribesmen under the order of Aurangzeb after being converted to Muhammadanism. But he somehow found an opportunity to return to Maharashtra and implored his people to allow him to re-embrace Hinduism. The Pandits recommended his case to Shivaji and he too was readmitted into the Hindu religion. The Peshwas continued this policy down to the days of Nana Fadnis and longer. We have original orders and documents, published in the *Diary of the Peshwas*, to show that several cases used to happen wherein a repentant person or persons forced to take to Muhammdanism or Christianity were retaken by the Hindus and their castes were consequently asked to resume all intersocial relations with them as before. For example, one Putaji, a soldier in the army that was serving in Surat district, fell in the hands of the Moslems and was forcibly converted to Islam. But when Balaji Bajirao was returning from Delhi, Putaji escaped and joined the Peshwas camp. All his caste people gathering in a meeting declared their willingness to take him back into their caste and intimated their decision to the Peshwa and were by the issue of a special order allowed to do so (pp. 215-6). Tulaji Bhat Joshi, who was converted not by

force but by 'allurements' to Muhammadanism repented of his action, repaired to Paithan and standing as a supplicant before the assembly of Brahmans, admitted his guilt and implored for pardon and permission to re-embrace the Hindu Faith. Whereupon the assembly of the Brahmans of Paithan—which was looked upon as a stronghold of orthedoxy,—decided to readmit him on the sole ground of honest repentance and dined with him. Consequently orders were issued by the officer of the Government to see that the decision of the Pandits was properly respected and Joshi was invested with all the rights and privileges of his caste. Even the disturbed days of Sambhaji proved no exception to this practice. An interesting order, issued by the authorities under the direction of the king and the Chatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, shows us not only that a man named Gangadhar Kulkarni who was after, being forcibly converted to Muhammadanism, readmitted into the Hindu fold, but also the details of the purification rites he had to undergo and concludes with an emphatic injunction,—perfectly consistent with a well-known verse of Manu, that those who would refuse to resume interdining and other acts of social intercourse with him would be guilty—they would be guilty of betraying the cause of Devas and Brahmans and would themselves be looked down upon as sinners. We may aslo mention here in passing the case of the Princess Indra Kumari of Jodhpur who long

after her marriage with the Mogul Emperor was readmitted into the Hindu fold by the Rajputs after her return from Delhi.

It was but natural that those who took upon themselves the mission of healing the political wounds that our motherland had so grievously sustained should also try their best to heal the social and religious wounds, too, which in a way were far more deadly than the political. The movement of Hindu liberation and Hindu revival that had inspired great achievements in the political and military fields was not likely to betray a dead callousness in feeling and striving to retrieve the deplorable losses that our civilization, polity and faith had to undergo during the stupendous fight we had to face from century to century. But still, while in less than a hundred years the Muhammadan rule spread their Faith throughout the Deccan to such an extent as to claim hundreds of thousands of Hindu converts to their proselytising swords, how regrettable is it that the Hindus, in spite of the Hindu rule that could conquer and crush Moslem thrones and crowns could not convert or even reclaim a few hundred Moslems back to Hinduism or even when that proselytising Moslem sword was broken to pieces by their valour and when they could have done so, had they willed it—had they been brought in that tradition. The reason is that although fetters of political slavery can at times be shaken off and smashed, yet the fetters of cultural

superstition are often found far more difficult to knock off. In addition to this human characteristic, when we take into consideration the second fact that much of the energy of the people of Maharashtra was necessarily consumed in the first and imperative necessity of achieving and maintaining the political independence of their nation and the great Hindu Empire, nay, build in the teeth of such deadly opposition from so many enemies sworn to destroy the political supremacy of the Hindus—we cease to wonder much that they could not spare more of it for such secondary movements—though in themselves of the utmost importance,—of social reform and Shuddhi. The real wonder is that they could initiate so revolutionary a movement as Shuddhi at all and succeed in attacking the centre of old superstition so effectively as to actually change the Hindu mentality and public opinion in favour of readmission of apostates into the Hindu fold and—what is far more difficult to bring about—to reinstate them into their old castes and guilds.

CHAPTER VI

A DEBT OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE

सौख्य स्मरुनि राज्याचें मिनापरि अखंड तळमळती.
प्रभाकर.

AND now let the curtain fall—alas so abruptly—on this our last and, so far as the past history of our race is concerned, one of the foremost of our Hindu Empires.

On the black day on which Dahir, our brave Hindu king of Sindh, fell on the Indus, with him fell our fortune too. Trilochan Pal, the Hindu king of Kabul, Jaipal and Anangpal of the Panjab, Prithviraj of Delhi, Jaichand of Kanouj, Sang of the Chittor, Laxman Sen of Bengal, Ramdeorao and Harpal of Deogiri, Vijayanagar kings and queens, crowns and coronets, one after another rolled in dust from the Indus to the seas: and the intrepid, the insolent, the irresistible foe stood with his knee firmly planted on the gasping breast of our race. Not only Chittoor, but on a vaster scale and in a less glorious manner, all India was reduced to a monumental heap of ashes with but a few cinders of martyrdom glowing out now and then in momentary sparks: and with that monumental heap of ashes, of the hopes of our race lying at his feet, sat Aurangzeb securely seated on his imperial peacock

throne with a hundred thousand swords ready to flourish out death at the slightest stamp of his angry foot.

Just when 'या सकळ भूमंडळाचें ठोंया हिंदु ऐसाउरला नहीं ' a band of Hindu youths gathered in a secret conclave in a little corner, " एका लहानशा कोनांत," and by their dead kings and queens, by those fallen crowns and coronest, by that monumental heap of the hopes of their race, swore to rise in revolt against their formidable foe to avenge the wrongs inflicted on their nation and their Faith and to vindicate the honour of the Hindn arms and the Hindu flag. The band of youths came out with but a few rusty swords to swear by. 'Absurd:' naturally exclaimed the world: 'Pooh !' snorted out Aurangzeb: 'suicidal,' warned the wise. Nor were they very much in the wrong. For Shivaji was not the first to rise in revolt. Many a spirited youth had risen before him and, failing, paid the dreadful penalty of a revolt. But the band still persisted, very warily though, believing that if they too happened to fail and had to pay the dreadful penalty of a revolt, such a revolt that would leave its memory like a seed to germinate in apparent oblivion, should still be more covetable than a lifelong servitude.

Some twenty years pass by : the brow of Aurangzeb is perceptibly sad and his speech low. For that little band of Maratha youths have become the nucleus o

a Hindu kingdom: Never mind, said the mighty Mogul. " I will stamp these Kaffirs out of existence while they are still confined to that wretched little corner." Soon with those hundred thousand flashing swords of his, the angry Moslem fell upon that devoted little Hindu kingdom and, in his formidable wrath, stamped so mightily on the soil, that gave those wretched rebels birth, that the soil cleft under both his feet. The mighty Moslem tottered. He could neither steady himself nor get out of the yawning, ever widening, and deepening gulf. The more furiously he stamped and strove, the deeper he sank, never to rise again. It was only over his grave and on that of those his hundred thousand flashing swords that the soil of that little corner closed again, and by the very steps of that imperial grave rose that little Hindu kingdom to the heights of a Hindu Empire.

For, soon the brave bands of Maharashtra came out and, led by their Geruwa banner, the sacred symbol of Hindudom, spread far and wide the War of Hindu Liberation. Gujarat they entered, Khandesh they entered, Malwa they entered, Bundelkhand they entered; they crossed the Chambal, they crossed the Godavari, they crossed the Krishna, they crossed the Tungabhdara; they camped at Tanjore, they held Gingi, they held Nagpur, they held Orissa. Step by step, stone on stone, they built, till from the Jamuna to the Tungabhadra and from Dwarka to Jagannath, the whole

territory was systematically and entirely freed from the Muhammadan yoke and held and conslidated into a continuous, contiguous, and powerful Hindu Empire. Then they crossed the Jamna and the Ganges, and the Gandaki; held Patna, the capital of the Guptas, worshipped the Kali at Calcutta, and the Vishveswar at Kashi. Then they—the descendants of that band which in tens and dozens had met in a secret conclave and sworn by a few rusty swords—their descendants marched no longer in tens but in hundreds of thousands, no longer in secret but with banners unfurled and bands playing —marched on the very capital of the Moslem Empire, and knocked mightily at its gate. The blustering Maulanas and Maulvis, who till then had ever been busy in convincing themselves and forcing others to get convinced of the truth of the Koran by citing the political victories of Islamite arms over the forces of the followers of the Puran, saw to their utter dismay that the Hindus, in spite of their caste and creed, their image worship and beardless chin, knocked down the gates of Delhi and, advancing in irresistible might, planted the Geruwa on all the strongholds of Islam. No Zebrial came to contest the triumph of Puran over Koran, as in days of old the Moslems fancied he was wont to do. No longer could it be said that the victory which attended the arms of the Moslem was one of the most convincing proofs of the truth of the Moslem Faith : that the dust of the temples bore witness to the falsity of the teaching of the Hindu

Faith. This argument, so specious but in times of racial panic and national defeat and consequent demoralisation so overwhelming, that it could claim more converts from the Hindu fold to the Moslem Faith than all other learned discourses and theological persuasions and proofs could do, was knocked so dreadfully on its head that it could have easily been made to tell quite the contrary tale. The temple towered high above the mosque. The crescent waned and gasped for it life and the sun rose heating the proud and splendid summits of Hindudom in molten gold. Delhi once more was held and ruled by the descendants of Prithviraj and, as Bhau would have it, the Hindus conquered back the kingdom of Hastinapur. Aurangzeb had snorted out 'Rats;' the rats bearded the lion in his own den and pulled out his claws and teeth one by one; the cows killed the butcher: even as our Guru Govind foretold, the hawks were hacked to pieces by the sparrows.

Thence, their forces bathed at Kurukshetra as warriors do, as martyrs do, and carried their triumphant Hindu arms to the walls of Lahore. The Afghans intervened and were driven beyond Attock. There the Maratha soldier drew in the reins, lighted down from his horse, and rested a little, while his generals and leaders at the headquarters were busy laying out their plans of a campaign to cross the Indus which would take their Hindu forces to Kabul and the Hindukush. Embassies from the Persians, the English,

the Portuguese, the French, from Holland and from Austria, visited Poona and requested that they should be allowed to reside there as ambassadors of their nations at the Imperial Court of Maharashtra. The Moslem Nabob of Bengal, the Moslem Viceroy of Lucknow, the Moslem Nizam of Hyderabad, the Moslem Sultan of Mysore, not to mention the chiefs and chieflings from Arcot to Rohilkhand, paid them tribute and Chowth and Sardeshmukhi, and what not, if but permitted to live. The Nizam was reduced to a revenue collector of the province he held, a bit troublesome, but who somehow was made to pour out from time to time all he used to collect into the Imperial Treasury of the Marathas. Nor were the Moslems the only foes they had to encounter. As we have seen, the Shah of Iran and the Shah of Kabul, the Turks and the Moguls, the Rohillas and the Pathans, the Portuguese and the French, the English and the Abyssinians, each and all had challenged their supremacy, had maintained, and fought field after field, by land, by sea : but the forces of the Hindus struck in the name of their *Deva* and *Desh* and smote all the haters of the Hindu cause, of Hindu Independence, wherever they met them by land or by sea. Rangana, Vishalged and Chakan; Rajapur Vengurla and Barsinor; Purandar, Sinhgad, Salher, Oombrani, Sabnoor, Sangamner, Phonda, Vai, Phaltan, Gingi, Satara and Dindori; Palkhed and Petlad; Chiplun, Vijayagad, Shrigaon, Thana, Tarapur and Vasai; Sarangpur, Tiral, and Jaitpur; Delhi and Durai ; Serai

and Bhopal; Arcot and Trichinopoly; Kadarganj, Farukabad, Udgir, Kunjpura and Panipat; Rakshasbhuvan; Unavadi, Motitalo and Dharvad; Shukratal and Nasibgad; Vadgaon and Borghat; Badami, Agra and Kharda: breaches mounted, sieges sustained, trophies captured, navies vanquished, battles won: these are but a few of those fields where their armies and navies won such glorious distinction that each of them would have occasioned, in our ancient history and the history of any other nation, the erection of commemorating columns. The *Haribhaktas* from the birth of Shivaji to the death of Nana Fadnis literally knew no defeat. As they advanced, they dropped secondary capitals, as large as the metropolises of many a sovereign nation in the world, as carelessly and copiously as you drop coppers from your overflowing pockets. Satara, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Tanjore, Sangli, Miraj, Gunti, Baroda, Dhar, Indore, Zansi, Gwalior, not to mention a host of lesser ones, were the capitals of provinces and districts as large as kingdoms in Europe. They had freed Haridwar and Kurukshetra, Mathura and Dakore, Abu and Avanti, Parashram and Prabhas, Nasik and Trimbak, Dwarka and Jagannath, Mallikarjun and Mathura, Gokul and Gokarn, from the iconoclastic fury of the haters of the Hindu Faith. Kashi and Prayag and Rameshwar once more raised their towers and turrets, fearlessly high, and "thanked the Lord that a Hindu Empire yet lived" to avenge their woes—a Hindu Empire that comprised nearly

all the territories forming the ancient kingdoms of the celebrated imperial dynasties of old: of the Maukharis, Chalukyas, Pallavas, Pandyas, Cholas, Keralas, Rashtrakutas, Andhras, Kesaris, Bhojas, Malvas, ot Harrsh and Pulkeshin, of the Rathoda, and Chavans. Its Governors and Commanders ruled at times over territories, as in the case, say, of Mahadaji Shindia, so vast as would have entitled a king to perform an *Asvamedha* in ancient days. Barring the glorious Empire of Chandragupta I and perhaps of the second Guptas in their palmiest days, no Hindu Empire in our history, written and mythologicai could match it in extent, or in magnitude, or in achievement, and so far as national services and sacrifices are concerned, almost none was called upon to face such awful difficulties and dangers and disasters, and yet none succeeded, if so magnificiently, in surmounting them all.

We feel that in our ancient history a technical distinction seems to have at times been attached to the words Chakravartin and Vikrama or Vikramadittya. A king who subdued all Hindu kings and proved his title to the assumption of the dignity of a paramount emperor was Chakravarthi. But he, who was not only as great a conqueror as Chakravartin, but had won that distinction not only by subduing our countrymen but by subduing some foreign power, had liberated our nation or civilization from some alien domination, was honoured by the

special distinction of being designated as Vikrama-dittya. The first Vikrama is reputed to have driven out the Scythians: the second, too, liberated our mother-land and our race from the fetters of the Western Sakas. The third, Yasho Dharma Vikramadittya drove away the Huns and killed their king in a great battte. If then this our suspicion be true and the high title and designation of Vikramadittya denoted essentially a warrior who warred in a righteous and holy cause against the alien foes of our land and our nation, a conqueror who went on a Digvijaya, not only for the sake of military glory, but for a moral and patriotic duty—national necessity—and saved our people from some imminent and great public danger by conquering the forces of aggressive fanaticism and lust, then those who built this last of our Hindu Empires—last, so far as the past history of our race is concerned—, performed deeds no less heroic and sublime in motive and far more glorious in magnitude than many a Chakravartin and Vikramadittya of old ; are therefore entitled to the same respect and love and gratitude that we Hindus cherish for and bear towards the celebrated and hallowed names in our ancient history. For they took up the banner of our race from the drooping hands of our Rajput kings, declared a holy war against all those who hated the Hindu cause and avenged the martyrdom of Dahir and Anangpal, Jaipal and Prithviraj, and Harpal and Pratap and Pratapadittya and Chittoor

and Vijayanagar which the genius of Madhavacharya and Sayanacharya, and the might of Harihar and Bukka, had built as a temple unto our Gods.

They won a gigantic war that continued so fiercely for some six centuries and more, and by demonstrating what triumphs the Hindu race, even when partially organised and but half awakened, could achieve, indicated its magnificent potentialities, if ever it rouses itself to fulness of corporate life and effort.

Let us acknowledge then our deep debt of love and gratitude that we all Hindus owe to them and pay the fealty and homage of a grateful people at their feet, even while they sit on the pinnacle of power and glory, and have a last lingering look of them and the great Hindu Empire they have so triumphantly built :—for the curtain is soon to fall, alas so abruptly! and sharply switch out the magnificent past from the weeping eyes of the present.

CHAPTER VII

THE CURTAIN FALLS

"………In his eyes
was mingled with surprise
The stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel."

" हिंमत सोडू नये सर्वपुन्हां येहल उदयाला ".

प्रभाकर.

WE have brought our review down to the battle of Kharda, 1795 A. D. All our remarks passed in the preceding chapters necessarily refer to this period under review. Ours has never been the intention of recounting and examining all the details of the Maratha movement, but only to bring out those which would enable us better to ascertain the leading motive, the underlying principle, that inspired and informed it, and ascertain, in that light, its real place in the history of our Hindu people. That task is done. Yet the period from 1795 A. D. to 1818 A. D, when the Maratha Empire fell, is too tragic to be passed by without a sigh or a tear.

The Marathas, as we have seen, had but just given a finishing stroke that won the long-lasting war of centuries of Hindu liberation and laid low their ancestral Moslem foe. Exhausted, they fetched a sigh

of relief and were just resting a while on their muskets. This was precisely the moment when a new and a far more powerful enemy, in spite of his being twice worsted, entered the lists again and assailed them with irresistible might.

Even then they could have won, at any rate repulsed him for the third time, but just then, as fate would have it, Nana died and Baji Rao II became the undisputed master of his people and the undisputing slave of their foes. These two men, Nana and Baji Rao II, embodied the two antagonistic tendencies that we find in conflict throughout the Maratha movement—one that inclined towards mean selfishness and denationalising self-aggrandisement : the other to patriotic sacrifices and public disinterestedness that made one glory oneself more in the greatness and independence of one's own nation than in crowns and coronets secured for oneself at their cost. The Marathas, although they could not eradicate it altogether, yet succeeded in holding the meaner instinct in check till the days of Nana and his generation—the result was the great Hindu-pad-padashahi they built. But now Baji Rào II—and by naming him we name his entire generation who typified the meaner instinct—had secured the upper hand and the Empire, without a principle of cohesion to hold it together, could not but totter to its fall assuredly : for just then, as we have seen, it was assailed, not by any Indian or Asiatic power, for in that case the Marathas

eing still on the whole better organised and more atriotic than any of them would have held their own —but by England ; the result of the combat was a oregone conclusion.

For England was then relatively far better equipped n all those essentials that contributed to great conquests. Their nation had long since passed the period of incubation, civil feuds and Wars of the Roses and religious persecutions and starchamber tyrannies. Unlike the Marathas, they had long been trained into all those public virtues of how to obey and order and of how to rule and submit, of patriotic loyalty to their country and their king—the national emblem of sovereignty—and, above all, racial cohesion and solidarity of aim and aspiration and loving subjection which a strongly consolidated nation-state engenders in a people. Even the Marathas—who of all Indian people were the best fitted in all these qualities—were woefully lacking in them relatively to the English.

Still single-handed they stood, they fought even frantically, knowing later on full well that it was a struggle for existence. Some, even like that last great patriot-Maratha, Bapu Gokhale, determined not to-surrender even when despair and death stared them in the face. "We may be," said he to an English officer, "we may be carrying our shrouds about our heads, but we are determined to die with our swords in our hands." But with all their capable statesmen and

generals, Mahadaji and Nana, Tukoji and Raghoji and Phadke, removed almost simultaneously by death, with exhaustion in their ranks and worthless men at their front and that Baji Rao II at their head—and England for their dreadful antagonist: The result of the combat was a foregone conclusion. The Marathas lost, and with them fell the last great Hindu Empire—the last great *Indian* Empire. Only in the Punjab the Sikhs yet kept alive a little flickering flame of Hindu independence; but that too was destined, and for identical reasons, soon to die out.

We acknowledge that it is not without a keen agony that we write this epitaph on the grave of this our great national Empire. But we grudge not England her victory. Like a good sportsman we admire her skill and might that, stretching her hand over oceans and seas, over continents and countries, snatched an Indian Empire from our struggling hand, and on that foundation has raised a magnificent World-Empire, the like of which history has scarcely recorded.

Here then in the year 1818. A. D. lies the grave of the last and one of the most glorious of our Hindu Empires. Watch it. Hope, with frankincense and offerings even as Mary did, in loving solicitude.

FINISH

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